

# Conflict and Peace : in Special View of India-China Galwan Valley Dispute

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## Abstract

India and China are the two most ancient civilizations of the world having their bilateral relations of more than past two thousand years, most of the time with positive interactions of 'Peace' except the last sixty odd years of 'Conflict' claiming some boundary issues. Now in the 21st century both the nations are considered as robust power and the fastest growing economies of the world while their relations are stretched very close to go to war because of some territorial intrusions especially during the recent dispute of Galwan Valley in Ladakh. There is so much that's not known about the India-China crisis in Ladakh, even many months after it began. However, what is known is that the horrific events of June 15, 2020 plunged India-China relations to their lowest point in decades.

**Keywords:** Conflict and Peace, Indo-China Skirmishes, LAC, CPEC, Belt and Road Initiative.

### Introduction

Conflict and Peace are referred to as two sides of the same coin meaning both act as a counterpart of each other. Most commonly, Conflict terms an enduring struggle between two opposing forces that occurs as a struggle over values may be for capturing physical material possessions, resources, status of power or supremacy over the others whereas Peace often terms as the converse of conflict which eliminates the fear of violence between individuals, groups or nations. Humanity has faced conflicts since the beginning of its civilization, only the forms of warfare being changed time to time by the inventions of armaments and artillery of that era. In early age human used to fight with arrow commands and swords, then used horses and elephants in chariot, then invented gunpowder for rifles and cannons, and now shifted to anti-ballistic missiles of nuclear age but the thing that remains same is the hazardous annihilation and destruction causing because of any conflict. We have witnessed two world wars, several armed conflicts amongst the nation-states and even the psychological war of superpower's ideology well known as the Cold War between the erstwhile USSR and USA, led to the hegemony with the help of military alliances and pacts. In our history, Mahabharata (3000 BC), Battle of The Ten Kings (3500-4000 BC), Battle of Hydaspes (326 BC), The Thirty Years War (1618-1648), First World War (1914-1918), Second World War (1939-1945), Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam war (1955-1975), Sino-Indian War (1962), Falklands War (1982), Gulf War (1991 & 2003) and presently the Syrian Crisis are numerous burning examples of conflicts that exposed the result of tragic mass destructions evolving human lives and their livelihood. At the same time during every conflict period, keeping in view all these irreversible hazards, the efforts for peace have been continued regularly to stabilize the existence of mankind. Peace Treaties always led to armistice that ends the state of war between fighting forces and sustains to maintain reconciliation and harmony amongst them by mutually agreed terms. At present UN Peace Keeping forces are performing a very significant role to control the conflict with the help of its member states and other regulatory bodies. International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Court of Justice are also playing vital roles to settle the disputes among nation-states by promoting equidistant.

**"Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."**

— Ronald Reagan (Former US President)

Recently in 2020 when the entire world is suffering through a strange conflict between humanity and an invisible enemy in the form of Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19), Indo-China skirmishes on LAC are the most concerning issue of the time. Although the India-China border dispute is not new but decades old so today keeping in view the above mentioned concept and significance of peace, the sincere efforts are required to resolve the ongoing tense scenario of India-China border dispute arisen because of the Galwan Valley clash.

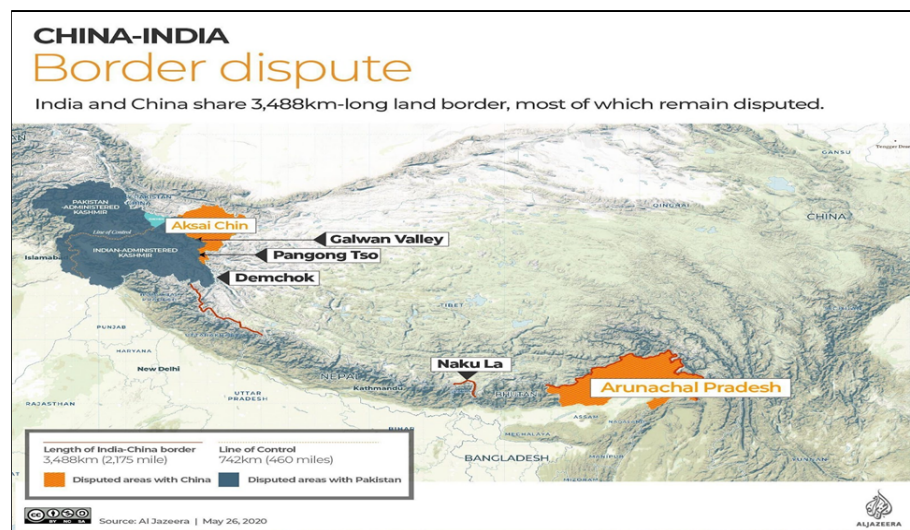


**Amit Singh**  
Research Scholar  
Dept. of Defence &  
Strategic Studies,  
P.P.N. P.G. College  
(Chhatrapati Shahu Ji  
Maharaj University),  
Kanpur, U.P., India



**Indra Jeet Singh**  
Associate Professor &  
Head.  
Dept. of Defence &  
Strategic Studies,  
Ex. Principal - P.P.N.  
P.G. College  
(Chhatrapati Shahu Ji  
Maharaj University),  
Kanpur, U.P., India

- Objective** The present study will focus on analyzing the facts liable for ongoing squabble of Galwan Valley enacting with the importance of the path of peace to ensure about the strategic stability as well as to maintain the risk-facto and peaceful co-existence for both the nuclear armed states India and China.
- The Study Area** The overall terrain situated between the hills near Galwan River is known as Galwan Valley that is adjacent to the Line of Actual Control, the disputed border of India and China. The river originates from the Chinese controlled part of Aksai Chin plateau in the Karakoram mountain-range and after flowing about 80 kilometers route, it joins the Shyok River in the eastern Ladakh of Indian territory. The boundary of the valley extends to the Indian Ladakh region in the west and Aksai Chin in the east which is controlled by China as part of its Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The valley considered as a point of highly strategic importance since the eastern part of Galwan is very close to China's G219 Xinjiang-Tibet Highway and widely contiguous to Siachen Glacier that is the world's highest battlefield as well as the only point for India from where India can observe the China-Pakistan strategic alliance going against it. Keeping its strategic features in view, China also wants to take the entire Galwan Valley under its control so that China can further strengthen its military formations on the disputed border area.
- Data Used & Methodology** Analytical and Qualitative method of description has been opted for the present study which relies on the approach of documentary analysis of the secondary data sources mainly the published articles, books, top peer-reviewed journals, magazines, newspapers, authentic internet sources, annual reports, handbooks, government documents and releases etc.
- Historical Background of India-China Border Dispute** The portrayal of Sino-Indian relations should not be denoted as a simple binary opposition but into a complex interplay between the two powerful nations. Over the thousands of years India-China relations were on very good terms except the last 60 years of clash and clatter claiming some border disputes. They jointly share 3,488 kilometers long land border that is categorized into three sectors Western, Middle and Eastern. The boundary dispute in the Western Sector pertains to the Johnson Line proposed in the 1860s during British rule over the Indian subcontinent. The line extended up to the Kunlun Mountains and the position of Aksai Chin was denoted in that time princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Independent India acceded the Johnson Line and preserved Aksai Chin as its own territory while China initially did not demur India's control over there till the early 1950s. However, after the communist rise in China, it reversed its position and stated that it had never acceded to the Johnson Line and claimed Aksai chin under its terrain. That's why China has long been involved in a triangular relationship with Pakistan and India, and is now a reluctant and silent third party to the dispute over Kashmir. In the Middle Sector, the dispute is a minor one and India and China have exchanged maps on which they broadly agree. The disputed boundary in the Eastern Sector is over the McMahon Line. The McMahon Line was granted by the 1914 Shimla Convention between British India and Tibet to settle their boundary but China refused to accept it and often claims the entire Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as a part of Chinese occupied Tibet. India was the first non-communist country of Asia who recognized People's Republic of China after its constitution as a nation as well as established diplomatic ties with PRC. Even in 1954 both states jointly signed the 'panchsheel agreement - The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, Non-interference in others internal affairs and Respect for each other's territorial unity, integrity and sovereignty' but the bilateral relations smashed by the surprised invasion of China in 1962 claiming for Tibetan and some other boundary issues in the Indian governed regions. After that the border disputes of both nations resulting in some other military conflicts time to time mainly the Chola Incident of 1967, Sino-Indian skirmish of 1987, The 'Doklam Plateau dispute of 2017' and now followed by the 2020 Galwan Valley bloody encounter which is considered as a part of an ongoing military standoff between China and India.



**Figure I - Image portrayal of India-China border dispute**

Source:aljazeeraNews,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/6/china-pulling-back-troops-after-deadly-border-clash-india>

**Galwan Valley Dispute and Ongoing Tense Scenario**

On June 15, 2020 in a steep section of a mountainous region in the Galwan valley of Eastern Ladakh, the troops of Indian Armed Forces and Chinese People’s Liberation Army clashed for six hours. Sources revealed that the violent clash resulted in the martyrdom of 20 Indian soldiers, including a commanding officer and at least 45-50 personnel of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. The immediate cause of the clatter is not so clear but the real cause of the standoff is the Chinese aspiration to halt India’s construction of new roads on the Indian side of the border to boost up its connectivity and border infrastructure. Since the month of May, China aggressively deployed troops in four major locations near eastern Ladakh, three in Galwan Valley and another one at Pangong Lake. Responding to Chinese aggression and to prevent any assault inside Indian terrain by the Chinese armed forces, India had also positioned an equal number of high-altitude warfare troops to these areas closer to the Line of Actual Control. Till then the People’s Liberation Army and Indian troops have been locked in an eye-to-eye position in several key areas including Pangong Tso and Galwan Valley.



**Figure II - Map view indicating the place of Galwan confrontation**

Source: BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53062484>

In the aftermath of the deadly bloodbath, contradictory official allegations was released by both the nations. Beijing alleged that Indian troops had attacked Chinese troops first. Even ‘The Global Times’ which is owned by the Chinese government blamed India for the stand-offs and claimed that India had illegally constructed defense facilities across the border into Chinese territory in the Galwan Valley region. On other side India expounded very clearly through various channels including the statement of a senior

Indian government official of the Ministry of External Affairs in 'The Hindu' that Chinese allegations are absolutely untrue and Chinese troops had started first the coercive force with dammed rivulets and boulders.

### **Transforming Indian Epoch**

In the 21st century, China and India are the two fastest growing economies and massive emerging superpowers of the world but the race of their technological and armed military supremacy has now converted into rivalry. China was never in favor of recognizing India's sovereignty and peaceful coexistence with its neighboring countries. China favored Pakistan during anti-Indian conspiracies and even used veto power to safeguard the Sino-Pak nexus. They jointly built China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through Karakoram highway in the disputed area of Jammu & Kashmir as a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (Silk Road) and in process to encircle India by setting up port projects and providing financial aids to India's neighboring countries so that China can use their landmass in case of any armed confrontation with India. China has illegally occupied Aksai chin and Saksham Valley and deployed a huge artillery and military personnel over there by developing roads and other projects in occupied regions but doesn't want any initiative of India in the Indian Territory itself which clears the aspiration of China against India. Nowadays China also provoked Nepal with the help of Communist Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli to trigger border disputes with India and to ruin India's image in the extant world politics.

Apart from all these Chinese efforts, day by day India comes closer to the world powers and building strong strategic and diplomatic partnerships with them. India has an expansive maritime strategy. Driven by great power aspirations and by strategic rivalry with China, India is expanding its naval capabilities and security relationships throughout the Indian Ocean region. India has paid significant attention to developing relationships at the key points of entry into the Indian Ocean—the Malacca Strait, the Persian Gulf and southern Africa. The newly elected government of India has also strengthened bilateral relationship with USA, Russia, Israel, Australia, UK, France, Germany, Japan, Vietnam and many more even with the Gulf Countries that are the main cause of threat for China at the moment. Recently India has received the long awaited 05 Rafale jets from France and also gained favor for the advanced delivery of the Russian S-400 anti-aircraft missile defense system, just after the Galwan Clash. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China is in vision to hold the position of most powerful country on the globe but after spread of COVID-19 from Wuhan city of Chinese province, it is believed as the biological weapon of China to attack on power bloc countries to deteriorate them and to capture or lead the world economy. As a result America aggressively not only blamed China but also took steps to siege Chinese hegemony in the South China Sea. The US deployed air carriers, war ships to conduct military exercises in the South China Sea. For this purpose the US sent two aircraft carriers - The USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan along with several warships in the South China Sea. According to the US Navy, the exercises are to support a free Indo-Pacific region. As a matter of fact, China's aspiration to demur India in extant world order politics all the time emerges security dilemma for India and undoubtedly Beijing's expanding role in south Asia has made India apprehensive, as a result India is also rapidly knotting new ties with other countries and power blocs in terms of strategic and diplomatic partnership to halt Chinese dominion.

### **Conclusion**

History is witness and full of examples that there is no gain from war but only the losses. Peace is the only key of societal friendship and harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. China and India also have experienced the nature of war and in back time taken some fruitful initiatives -

1. In the year 1993, they jointly signed 'Agreement of Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the LAC'
2. In the year 1996, conjointly recognized 'Agreement of Confidence-Building Measures in the military field along the LAC'
3. In the year 2005, 'Protocol on the Modalities of Confidence-Building Measures in the Military field along the LAC' formed mutually.
4. In the year 2012, they together agreed on 'Agreement on the Establishment of a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China border affairs'
5. In the year 2013, 'Border Defence Cooperation Agreement' was ratified by both.

In 2014 India also proposed 'One India' policy for China's acknowledgement to resolve the border dispute perpetually. Keeping in view the ongoing critical and tense scenario of

Galwan, both nations are already in process to establish the mechanism at military as well as diplomatic levels with the help of peaceful dialogues for the resolution. Experts are in opinion that being both the nations as nuclear-armed states, it is utmost important to settle their border disputes with the help of mutually agreed approaches in terms of CBMs and other peaceful negotiations for the peaceful co-existence and betterment of Sino-Indian bilateral relationship, because –

**"Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding" — Albert Einstein**

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