

China vs India: Who Benefits? US Meddling

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A recent border dispute between China and India have resulted in multiple casualties including deaths. It is the first time in decades that this scale of violence has been seen between the two nations. Western headlines have immediately tried to play up the notion of conflict between China and India, but to what end?

China and India respectively have the two largest populations. Both find themselves within the top 5 largest economies on Earth. Both have tremendous historical, cultural, and political influence regionally as well as growing influence globally.

Recent headlines have focused on a simmering conflict along China and India's borders, but at other times in recent years, Chinese and Indian cooperation have been on the rise – a fact conveniently underreported in many articles.

Of course, neither China nor India as nations benefit from armed conflict between one another. Both nations possess large conventional armed forces and both nations possess nuclear weapons. Both nations have suffered from the impact of COVID-19 economically. A large-scale conflict would be costly and catastrophic for China and India.

China has maintained that it was merely responding to Indian aggression along the border and claims it seeks to quickly deescalate tensions.

China's CGTN in an article [titled](#), "China's military urges India to stop provocative actions along border areas," would claim:

China's military voiced strong dissatisfaction and opposition Tuesday to India's provocative actions on Monday evening in the Galwan Valley region, which caused severe clashes and casualties. It urged India to go back to the right track in properly managing disputes.

Conversely, India's media tells a different tale. The violence has been immediately leaped upon by hawks to bolster entirely unrelated issues involving China's "challenge" to the international "status quo." It is a narrative that sounds torn straight from a Washington-based think tank's white papers.

The Indian Express in an article [titled](#), "Explained: What the clash in Ladakh underlines, and what India must do in face of the Chinese challenge," cites Indian politicians, explaining that the incident serves as impetus to create a wider confrontation with China in a bid to roll back not only its regional influence – but its growing global reach.

It claims (emphasis added):

According to Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Congress leader in Lok Sabha, this escalation “underlines the scale of the problem and the challenge ahead” for New Delhi in its dealings with Beijing. Chowdhury argues in The Indian Express that “China has clearly twisted the crisis into a strategic opportunity by taking advantage of the geo-political distraction”.

That China is becoming more belligerent across strategic theatres, challenging the status quo, is supported by multiple examples from the South China Sea. For the Government of India, this is a moment to guard against complacency, fostered by decades of nimble diplomacy that led to equilibrium, however precarious, on the border issue with China.

The issue regarding the South China Sea is one entirely manufactured out of Washington, with many of the actors involved – including the Philippines – having long since distanced themselves from the potential conflict in favor of [building better ties](#) with Beijing.

For certain Indian politicians to cite Washington’s game in the South China Sea, and to then lump it in with this most recent border dispute – rather than simply seeking to deescalate tensions is highly suspicious.

British state media – the BBC – in its [article](#), “India-China clash: An extraordinary escalation ‘with rocks and clubs’,” would claim:

Mr [Shivshankar] Menon, who served as India’s ambassador to China, believes that China is resorting to strident nationalism, due to “domestic and economic stresses” at home. “You can see it in their behaviour in Yellow Sea, towards Taiwan, passing laws without consulting Hong Kong, more assertive on India’s border, a tariff war with Australia.”

The BBC fails to point out that China’s policies toward Taiwan, Hong Kong, and recent trade disputes with Australia are all – without exception – owed to US meddling in China’s internal affairs. The US which officially recognizes Taiwan as China’s territory has all but worked to carve it off from China and establish it as a US foothold on China’s doorstep.

The same can be said of Hong Kong with recent violence there [openly sponsored by the US](#).

Australia – who counts China as its largest trading partner – and whose government is increasingly friendly with Beijing, has recently caved to US pressure and joined in political campaigns accusing China of unleashing COVID-19 – thus kicking off renewed tensions between the two nations.

If Indian politicians and diplomats see the recent border incident as “related” to US-driven conflicts aimed at encircling and containing China – does that mean this most recent border incident and the decidedly more aggressive reaction by some of India’s politicians falls into the same category?

Cui Bono?

China and India have had border issues in the past. Total war has been avoided and the conflicts have done little to change any significant aspects of either nation’s regional or global influence. In other words, even if India felt it was losing out to China’s rise – using a border incident to start a wider conflict would hardly help India change this fact.

For India – seizing on this conflict regardless of who really initially provoked it – does nothing to serve India’s interests in the short, intermediate, or long-term. They do – however – perfectly serve the interests of the United States who would prefer neither China nor India rise as regional powers – and would find it as ideal for both nations to destroy one another partially or entirely while the US reasserts itself across the region.

Provocations and those attempting to exploit them may represent Washington’s best interests, but they do not represent India’s or China’s. Those involved are hawkish and decidedly pro-Washington serving US interests at India’s expense.

Meanwhile, other Indian leaders and their Chinese counterparts have worked since the conflict arose to deescalate and resolve border issues – or at least resolve them to where military exchanges are no longer an option.

Even the BBC, at the very end of its article, admitted that despite the illusion of imminent war – China and India have enjoyed growing ties, stating (emphasis added):

“For 10 years, Sino-Indian rivalry has steadily intensified, but remained largely stable,” he [Shashank Joshi] said. India and China have also been more engaged. Bilateral trade increased 67 times between 1998 and 2012, and China is India’s largest trading partner in goods. Indian students have flocked to Chinese universities. Both sides have held joint military exercises.

It is unlikely that the vast majority in both China and India benefiting from constructive ties between the two nations will give in to a tiny minority who ultimately serve the interests of neither nation and instead the interests of Washington far abroad and away from the consequences of unchecked conflict.

For these reasons it’s safe to say that while this conflict is dangerous and both sides need to treat it with maximum caution and care, the fact that neither side benefits from the conflict unraveling out of control means it is very unlikely to do so.

While the recent violence has been unseen in decades, it can be hoped that it is one of the last disputes between China and India that involves violence, and the last gasp of malign interests seeking to sabotage and set back both nations.

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