

## **POST GALWAN - DETER CHINA'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

### **Treachery at Galwan**

The Ghost of Galwan will haunt China for the rest of this century. The treachery at Galwan on 15 June 2020 wherein PLA troops in a preplanned ambush assaulted Indian soldiers with the most primitive weapons like spiked clubs has not only changed the dynamics of the management of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), but has also impacted the the India - China relations. The PLA troops laid a deliberate ambush, breaching the agreed-upon protocols, attacking Colonel Santosh Babu and his patrol who had gone to check on the agreed-upon disengagement in Galwan. 20 Indian braves made the supreme sacrifice defending the territorial integrity of our nation. Without resorting to use of their personnel arms they did give a befitting reply to the PLA reportedly causing some 40 odd fatalities.

In a manner of speaking China did not violate the letter of the 1993, 1996 Agreements 'On The Maintenance Of Peace Along The Line Of Actual Control on The India-China Border', however China violated the spirit of the agreements, breaking the "Peace and Tranquility" which existed for close to 45 Years along the most peaceful longest disputed border in the world. Galwan is also a violation of the much touted famous Wuhan spirit and the 'Strategic Guidance' to their respective forces, by President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi, two of the most powerful leaders in the world. The April 2018 informal summit at Wuhan resolved the 73 day stand off between the Indian Army and the PLA at the 88 sq Km Doklam plateau in Western Bhutan. The Wuhan spirit was believed to have ushered in a new era of strategic partnership and growing relations between the two nuclear armed Asian giants, home to one third of humanity. The Wuhan informal summit was followed by a second informal summit between the two leaders at Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu in October 2019. The High profile summit reinforced the Wuhan spirit. However within a few months of the Mahabalipuram summit, at the first signs of summers along the high

Himalayas, China in an unprecedented demonstration of aggressiveness carried out multiple incursions leading to standoffs at Pangong Tso, Hotsprings and Galwan in Eastern Ladakh and Nakula in Sikkim. The incursions, unlike the previous ones at Depsang in 2013, Chumar in 2014, and Doklam in 2017 were more in scope, depth, and intensity, indicating that China was there to stay. At Nakula and Pangong Tso the Indian army stood their ground leading to pushing, shoving, and stone-pelting, which is considered as the lowest end of violence and though not common but does happen, despite the 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement signed post 'Depsang' intrusion by the two nations with a specific purpose of avoiding such contingencies.

There have been many analyses and narratives on the sequence of actions and the consequences, which are not critical to the outcomes and way forward, however, these will dictate the way forward. The key certainty is that the trust of a nation has been violated causing anguish and anger, and this will drive India's China policy.

The WHY of China's Aggressive Behaviour along the LAC.

India - China relations are a set of contradictions, with phases of cooperation, competition, confrontation and conflict of interests.

China is now indulging in its tried and tested strategy of 'military coercion' with the aim of imposing its will on India. Unfortunately China misjudged India's resolute response at the military, diplomatic, economic and political domains. Military Coercion has been a successful strategy for China practicing the 'Three warfare Strategy' to subdue nations for an expansionist China. China's PLA practices the "Three Warfare Strategy" of public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare. In addition, China is also practicing a three-pronged approach at the Geopolitical level, this being 'Debt Trap', 'Wolf Diplomacy' "Military Coercion" in seeking a bipolar world order. It is essential for the militaries, sinologists, and strategists to understand China's "Three Warfares" strategy and the Geopolitical end game to be able to discern Beijing's

intentions and objectives. An Expansionist China seeks a Bi-Polar world challenging the US as the sole superpower. The arrogance and aggressive behaviour of China are a constant threat to peace in the world and the region. The COVID19 or the made in China Corona Virus has impacted the emerging world order. Chinese forces are not only demonstrating an unprecedented aggressiveness along the India- China LAC, but also in the South China Sea, Taiwan, Korea, East Sea, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. India will need to discern China's intent and the larger strategic signals emanating from Beijing, in the geopolitical domain.<sup>1</sup> As is a common belief China's aggressiveness is definitely not on account of India operationalizing the Darbuk - Shyok - DBO road and thus posing a threat to Karakoram pass. China would not have waited all these years for the road to be completed, he would have done so earlier. The strategic importance of the road and the forward Air landing Ground at DBO is limited in scope. The road mainly is a lifeline for the border guardian forces, facilitating the domination of the Indian perception of the Line of actual control. The Shyok - DBO road does not sustain and maintain India's Siachen deployment. The Leh - Khardungla - Thoise road is the Lifeline for Siachen.

The One Belt One Road / Belt and Road Initiative ( BRI) is a China dream, India is the only major country, which has not only not supported the BRI, but openly opposed it. China has invested heavily in BRI and hence is trying to coerce India into accepting the BRI or at best not opposing it. The BRI which is of vital strategic and economic interest for China is likely to run into trouble after the pandemic as more and more nations distance from China. The 'debt trap' too is likely to lose some of its leverages as a number of nations shun not only made in China products and apps but may not favourably view Chinese control of vital ports, airfields, and installations. China would have liked nothing better than to quietly accept the BRI. Another major concern is the China Pakistan Economic Corridor ( CPEC), which is central to the China dream of One

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<sup>1</sup> Post Wuhan - Is China back to military coercion? , The Financial Express  
<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/post-wuhan-is-china-back-to-military-coercion/ar-BB14ptk5>

Belt One Road. China has invested nearly 62 bn USD in the project. At the strategic level the CPEC gives China access to Gawadar Port which has been leased to China for forty years, and mitigates its 'Malacca Dilemma'. It needs to be noted that President Xi Jinping signed the agreement acquiring the control of Gwadar for forty years within 24 hours of his assuming the supreme leadership of China on 14 March 2013. The CPEC passes through the Indian territories occupied by Pakistan. There have been numerous calls in India to integrate Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). These calls directly threaten China's vital national interest. China has apparently planned out a well laid out strategy of taking full and final control of Gilgit Baltistan and parts of Balochistan. It has already made heavy investments in Gawadar port and Airfield creating a full fledged Chinese township. The control of Gwadar port is strategically and economically critical for China to ensure an uninterrupted flow of Oil from the Gulf and a direct connection with West Asia. The three alignments of CPEC connect Xinjiang through the Karakoram highway with Gwadar thus mitigating China's 'Malacca Dilemma'. India's intent and threats would definitely have been factored in China's demonstration of military coercion along the LAC.

India, demonstrating a political will, abrogated the provisions of Article 370 as applicable to J&K on 05 Aug 2019, carved out two Union territories of J&K and Ladakh from the erstwhile state, rightly seeking full control of its territories occupied by both Pakistan and China. The call to also liberate 38000 sq Km of Aksai Chin occupied by China since the 50s and post 1962 in parliament, by no less than the Home Minister, is another factor for China's aggressive behaviour. China's response along the LAC should have been expected, as an obvious reaction. Why India failed to recognise Chinese reaction and intent needs more analysis. The Wuhan spirit and the strategic guidance to the two border guardian forces by President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi, definitely contributed to a growing relationship and trust between the two Asian giants. The second high profile Informal summit telecast live and watched by over 500 million Indians, at the coastal town of Mahabalipuram was seen as strengthening the strategic partnership, taking it to the next level contributed to a growing

trust between the two nations as did the touted of an excellent Chemistry between two leaders. India in a repeat of 1962 was once again taken in by the Chinese charm.

Another major factor is the made in China CoronaVirus. COVID 19 has directly impacted the emerging world order, which is likely to witness a shift of power from the West to the East. The global architecture will witness major shifts as the US now openly rebalances and redeploys the forces to counter future threats emanating from China. China loses its leverages as it is believed to have caused the pandemic, it would like to keep India away from the US and the West. India will be a global leader and a balancing power in the post-COVID19 emerging world order. China Will need Indian support to fight the world community for the havoc it has unleashed, what surer way than to indulge in military coercion to pressurise India not to align with the US. Unfortunately China failed to assess India's resolute response of the military and diplomacy. India's responsible and well considered response of ' NO BLINKING NO BRINKMANSHIP' surprised the Chinese as India carried out a rapid build up all along especially in Ladakh, initially the build up was equitable and proportional and later demonstrated a firm resolve and posturing, culminating in the visit to the frontline troops at Leh on 05 July. PMs visit was a strategic signal to China that India's territorial integrity and sovereignty are non negotiable. Any threat will lead to escalation for which India is well prepared.

A number of industries and companies are moving out of China and India is a preferred destination, however, in case of a security threat, these companies are not likely to invest and relocate to India. China has hence created a security situation to discourage the Companies to moving out. Earlier India had also restricted Chinese investment by Indian companies after Chinese owned companies acquired a one percent stake in India's top private bank HDFC. India to ensure data security and signal to China banned 59 popular Chinese apps in India, taking a lead while demonstrating to the world that China is vulnerable in many more ways.

## What Next?

Political trust is another major casualty of Galwan. It should now be obvious to the political leadership that any accommodation through a focus only on tackling military dynamics, is an eyewash that only creates incentives for China to indulge continuously in using the Sino-Indian border as a pressure point. China promotes the canard of it being a military problem, to hide its political maneuvers.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian approach must move away from merely seeking to straighten out military face-offs, which is necessary, but certainly highly insufficient. India must seek resolution to political issues which flare up and manifest in military problems specially so along the LAC. Politically the first move must be the restoration of the status quo that prevailed before the present crisis that is followed by implementation of the agreement of 1993 regarding the identification of LAC. Till these conditions are met, India must roll out its actions on the political and diplomatic fronts that it intends to adopt. It must call out China's perfidy and plug into the expanding number of nations that view China as a major threat to stability and peace.<sup>3</sup>

The disengagement process commenced in Eastern Ladakh, post the 30 Jun talks between the top military commanders followed by talks of the Special Representative (SR) between India's NSA Mr Ajit Doval and China's state councilor and Foreign Minister Mr Wang Yi. On account of a total lack of trust post Galwan Incident the disengagement process will be long and laborious, which will hopefully be followed by a much smoother mutual de-escalation. Disengagement and creating a ' Buffer Zone' will reduce the tensions and a possible repeat of Galwan with the potential of a spiral to a skirmish and a conflict. At the strategic level , China will continue to assert pressure along the LAC. The disputed border will now

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<sup>2</sup>[https://cenjows.gov.in/upload\\_images/Synodos/pdf/Galwan-Incident-by-Lt-Gen-Vinod-Bhatia-\(Retd\).pdf](https://cenjows.gov.in/upload_images/Synodos/pdf/Galwan-Incident-by-Lt-Gen-Vinod-Bhatia-(Retd).pdf)

<sup>3</sup>ibid

become a contested border and be the ever present and clear danger as also a driver for conflict between the two nuclear armed neighbours , home to one third of humanity. At the operational and tactical level, China will exert pressure to change the status quo, resorting to increased transgressions and faceoffs which will be more in scope, depth, intensity, and frequency. PLA has over the years invested in the 'Three Rs' - roads, reserves and radars, ensuring a cost effective management of the LAC. Accordingly, PLA will carry on with the road-building activities connecting maximum sensitive areas with roads, increase surveillance and reconnaissance capability, reinforce forward airfields and create logistics infrastructure.

Despite the ongoing agreed upon disengagement, the present standoff may continue longer as part of China's 'Three Warfare' strategy and the ongoing military coercion. China is not likely to risk any escalation of the present situation, continued peace and tranquility are as much in China's interests as in India's. China for once has bitten more than it can chew.

### India's Options and Way Ahead

For too long, our correct stance with China has emboldened it to continuously create situations that repeatedly and blatantly violate agreements, rolls out lies, deceit, deception, disinformation, falsehood, and misrepresentation and casts the blame on India. We should adopt a policy of responding to 'Salami Slicing' with a speedy 'Quid Pro Quo' in unheld areas and there are viable options available. We should politically and diplomatically leverage China's vulnerabilities in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Tibet. More importantly, dealing with an arrogant and rising China must be animated by the power of the collective that must be aimed to safeguard against common threats and promote common interests. It is

time India refrains from deceiving itself of China's true nature, which in political terms is preserved by the CCP and not the people.<sup>4</sup>

China respects strength and India needs to openly build and demonstrate its strength, especially military prowess and intent to use as a last resort as and when its territorial integrity is threatened. India should also look at diplomacy, creating strategic and diplomatic dilemmas for China, "Bind To Balance" with like-minded nations, without impinging on our strategic autonomy. Quad is one good option, which needs to be strengthened in the strategic domain, with a single minded approach to deter and contain China. The impact of economic leverages though limited in the near term is an effective tool in the long term. China has only succeeded in alienating over 600 mn Indian youth who will remember China's treachery at Galwan for the rest of the century. This is unfortunate as the 1962 generation was fading and there was developing a new relationship and trust among the two people.

Militarily, India will have to seek 'Peace through Preparedness' and keep its powder dry. For far too long China has always been considered a long term threat, this has now changed as China knocks at our doorstep. China now is the primary security threat in the immediate/ near term. India will need to invest in military capabilities to deter China's aggressive behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

On July 17, 2013, in the wake of the face-offs at Depsang, the government-sanctioned the raising of 17 Corps, with a non-defensive role along Northern borders. The aim was to create capabilities to deter China's aggressive behaviour along the contested LAC. Manpower accretions and initial raising expenditure of about Rs 65,000 crore (\$8.6 billion) was

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<sup>4</sup>[https://cenjows.gov.in/upload\\_images/Synodos/pdf/Galwan-Incident-by-Lt-Gen-Vinod-Bhatia-\(Retd\).pdf](https://cenjows.gov.in/upload_images/Synodos/pdf/Galwan-Incident-by-Lt-Gen-Vinod-Bhatia-(Retd).pdf)

<sup>5</sup> ibid



considered a prudent long-term investment against an increasingly hegemonic China. To mitigate the financial burden, the raising was to be carried out over eight years, to be completed by 2020-21.<sup>6</sup>

There is a need to revisit the sanctioned Mountain Strike corps, raising it with full compliments and wherewithal duly supported by financial allocations. Analysts observing the ongoing standoff have been critical of repeated Chinese boundary violations and military coercion to create a 'new normal', year on year, to seek a creeping advantage along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as well as geopolitically. There are calls for India to do a 'tit for tat' militarily to force a status quo ante on the Chinese. This will need capabilities for 'active deterrence', based on improved defensive and offensive capacities, including in the asymmetric domain. It was precisely to create this 'offensive (active)-defence' capability that the Army, in the first decade of this millennium, sought the raising of a Mountain Corps, commonly referred to as the Mountain Strike Corps. The intent was to have a dedicated Corps to comprehensively look at the operational dynamics of the entire border with China, collate the entire ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) canvas of Chinese activities, provide acclimatised battle-ready formations, with inbuilt rapid air mobility to respond to situations, like the current intrusions, for effective and equitable quid pro quo options. The aim was to create capabilities to enable military-diplomatic negotiations from a position of relative strength. The Mountain Corps, once fully formed and operationalised, would have given multiple military employment options with integral ISR and rapid deployment capabilities exploiting mountain-specific platforms like ultra-light howitzers, helicopters (including heavy-lift ones like Chinooks and attack helicopters like Apaches), UAVs, missiles etc. It would have also enabled synergising the asymmetric warfare means. Notably, this geographically unified structure was proposed ahead of China creating the Western Theatre Command in 2016.<sup>7</sup> Had India supported the sanctioned raising, 90 per

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<sup>6</sup> <https://m.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/revisiting-mountain-corps-to-deter-china-100707>. Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia and Lt Gen Anil Ahuja

<sup>7</sup> <https://m.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/revisiting-mountain-corps-to-deter-china-100707>. Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia and Lt Gen Anil Ahuja

cent capability would have been achieved by now, which could have been an effective deterrent, definitely raising costs for incursions by China. The raising, however, was not backed by the sanctioned financial resource and thereafter finally put on hold in 2018.

Events like the current LAC stand-off offer an opportunity to review some capability development decisions in hindsight and transformation decisions in perspective. An overly aggressive China seems to have lost respect for mutual sensitivities, concerns, aspirations and is creeping menacingly into our immediate neighbourhood. India has no choice but to build defensive capability with an integral offensive content. This calls for expeditiously reviving the raising of the Corps for mountains with all its integral force multipliers. Substantial cost optimisation can be carried out by utilising the manpower savings accruing from Shekatkar Committee reforms.<sup>8</sup>

It is rightly said that to respond to China, India must focus on economic development, with the ability to respond to weaponisation of trade. Aspirations of becoming an economic power with ability to fulfill global and regional aspirations cannot be realised without permanently securing our frontiers. Periodic Chinese coercive actions along the LAC only dampen the momentum and remain a perpetual drag. The cost of capability development, including reviving the Mountain Corps, is an investment for a secure and self-reliant, risen, responsible and resurgent India.<sup>9</sup>

The LAC is managed jointly by the Army and ITBP, leading to two channels of reporting and issues of accountability. This dual command and control structure leads to conflicting directions and guidelines

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<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> <https://m.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/revisiting-mountain-corps-to-deter-china-100707>. Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia and Lt Gen Anil Ahuja

emanating from the two controlling ministries i.e. MHA and MOD and intermediary headquarters. On the other hand China has a single well defined command structure wherein the Border Defence Regiments are directly under command of the PLA. The ITBP on its own is not capable of either managing the borders or the "Face Offs" with the PLA. The ITBP lacks the resources, wherewithal and structures to defend the borders on its own and deal with the PLA on equal terms. Invariably the Army given its mandate for defending the borders assumes the responsibility and is accountable to the nation. There is a difference between Border Guarding (ITBP) and Border Defence (Army) and responsibilities overlap, which leads to suboptimal border defence.

The report of the Group of Ministers (GOM) on National Security identified the various problems of border management. Para 5.1 of the report categorically states *"Multiplicity of forces on the same borders has inevitably led to the lack of accountability as well as problems of command and control."* The major problem identified, the GOM vide para 5.12 recommends *"At present there are instances of more than one force working on the same border and questions of conflict in command and control have been raised frequently. Multiplicity of forces on the same border has also led to lack of accountability on the part of the forces. To enforce the accountability, the principle of 'one border one force' may be adopted while considering deployment of forces at the border."* The recommendations of the GOM have been implemented along all our borders with neighbouring countries except the most sensitive and important border with China.<sup>10</sup>

China has effectively reduced the hitherto build up capability to wage a war against India from a two campaigning seasons (spread over two summers) to a single season. Employing the multi dimensional infrastructure available, China has now the capability to build requisite forces in a few weeks time. This capability is further enhanced as PLA Rapid Reaction Forces can be airlifted to augment the combat power

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<sup>10</sup> <https://cenjows.gov.in/synergy-detail?id=40>, Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia

deployed in situ and moved by extensive Road Network. This is a significant military threat as it enhances the PLAs ability to engage in a short swift and decisive war.<sup>11</sup>

India will have to synergise all elements of comprehensive national power including the soft power or smart power, ie Political, Diplomatic, Economic, military, Informational and Cultural. It needs to revitalise and reorient the “Act East Policy” to make it more focused and inclusive with Japan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. India needs to ‘Bind to Balance’ with Southeast Asian nations as they too are facing China’s aggressiveness.

The roads are a basic requirement, the airfields, advance landing grounds and logistics installations can only be constructed once the road communication network is in place. The terrain friction on own side of the borders precludes a vast network as there is no complementarity between sectors and even sub sectors. India has to contend with terrain fractured sectors, with almost all of them presently being connected by a single Road axis. Zozilla and Rohtang passes connecting Ladakh remain closed for over six months in a year. The Rohtang tunnel should get operational soon, that will be some relief, however the planned tunnels at Zojila do not seem to be making any progress. Similarly THE middle sector too has a single road axis to Shipkila ( Himachal Pradesh), Harsil, Joshimath sectors in Uttarakhand and a recently operationalised road to Lipulekh. Sikkim again has a single road axis and Arunachal is the worst off. Mr Modi’s government has demonstrated the resolve to take and implement hard decisions in the interest of National Security. Some of the initiatives which the government needs to take on priority in a time bound manner are enumerated.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://books.google.co.in/books?id=2\\_YWCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT418&lpg](https://books.google.co.in/books?id=2_YWCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT418&lpg)

India as a late starter can not compete with the state of the art multi model multi dimensional infrastructure developed by the Chinese all along the borders in Tibet and Xinjiang. Post 1962 India imposed a self restraint on developing roads along the borders in a mistaken belief that these will aid China in a conflict rather than India. In 2005 the government sanctioned 73 strategic roads to be completed by 2012. As of 2020 only 62 roads stand completed that too with a push to infrastructure development in the last few years by PM Modi's government. What India urgently needs is an integrated infrastructure development plan for the Northern borders. This will be best achieved by an Empowered committee under Niti Ayog consisting of experts serving and retired from the Military and various dealing ministries to chart out and implement Infrastructure development along Northern borders. This will not only be required for security but also for development of the border areas to provide the much needed communication, education, health, tourism and economic upliftment of our people, integrating them with the mainstream. The NHAI should be made responsible for ensuring construction of main and alternate highways as also the state highways and major arterial roads. The feeder roads to be constructed and maintained by the BRO and the last mile connectivity will be undertaken by the Army from the operation works funds and integral engineering resources. The many weaknesses of the BRO and present capabilities and systems are well known and need no emphasis. The construction of the roads need to be outsourced. No private company will deploy costly equipment and resources for only six months a year in hostile terrain wherein the working season in high altitude is only six months, hence a cluster of roads will have to be outsourced far end to end connectivity to one contractor. This will ensure optimal employment of equipment and resources as also profitability for the construction companies and more importantly seamless connectivity for security forces and the people.

The requisite clearance required to undertake projects in the interest of National Security should not be held hostage to the various environmental clearances required and court rulings. There is hence a need for an Empowered committee to ensure the conceptual framework, execution

and monitor progress. The DMRC is a perfect example of a project implementation given the will, authority and resources with accountability. This model should be replicated for Infrastructure development. Land Acquisition Act 2014 needs to be amended so that it is not applicable upto a depth of 100 kms along our Northern Borders and 50 kms along our Western borders .

In addition, Armed forces need to look inwards and carry out strategic rebalancing from West to East. The defence budget will always be inadequate on account of competing priorities at the national level. India will also do well, to invest in the strategically important Andaman & Nicobar Islands, as they provide a viable counter pressure point as a threat in being. Indian navy needs dedicated funds for growth to meet the aspirations of a growing India specially to counter Balance China's advantage along the borders. China's encirclement of India will need to be countered by the Navy's dominance of the IOR, with or without like minded nations.

India should also seriously look at the way forward in ensuring self-reliance in defence manufacturing. A major nation like India can not be seen running around the world with emergent demands every time there is a crisis, as has been seen in the wake of surgical strikes in September 2016, precision air strikes on Balakote in February 2019 and the India-China standoff of May 2020. India is the largest importer of arms with nearly 65% of the military hardware of Russian origin. The lack of a defence industrial base also forces the Armed Forces to store an unnecessarily huge inventory as War Wastage Reserves.

India and the military need to enhance the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities replicating the Chinese three R model ( Roads, Radars, and Reserves) for effective LAC management. There needs to be a synergy between agencies responsible for strategic, operational and tactical/military intelligence.

India should also prepare to mitigate threats emanating from China's non contact warfare strategy, mainly in the Cyber domain. Future warfare will be multi domain warfare and linear wars as we know will only be a subset of multi domain warfare. Many analysts have compared the Indian army and the PLa, The Indian Air Force and PLAAF, Indian Navy with PLAAN, concluding that it is advantage indian forces. There is no doubt that the indian Armed Forces and the army in particular are combat rich and battle hardened, as aslo the best force for high altitude warfare. However, the army's, airforces and navies do not fight each other on one one wrs, nations go to war. Chinna's non contact warfare capabilities need to be assessed and defensive offensive capabilities enhanced to mitigate this threat. The government has done well to ban 59 Apps as China will feel the economic and commercial costs of a growing economy with a large youth bulge shunning Chinese products. Armed forces have also banned 89 apps, mostly Chinese as these are a security threat as the Data is stored in China. One who controls Data has leverages over the host nation. Tommorrow's wars will also be waged in the virtual domain with ' Virtual Societal Warfare' a reality now.

New age warfare is equally a war of narratives, where fires are brought to bear not only in the kinetic domain but also in the virtual domain. Today's world is an interconnected networked world with billions having easy and instant access to numerous apps feeding their narratives and perceptions of events to satiate the hunger for information of critical events. India should factor Information warfare in its strategy to deter China's aggressive behaviour. Former soldiers too need to be taken on board to ensure that they do not unknowingly and inadvertently become tools of our adversaries Information war which adversely impacts the military and

national security.<sup>12</sup> Information War is an essential ingredient of victory. India needs Information war structures and systems at the national level as also with the armed forces. Today, the information age offers new challenges and opportunities. Cyberspace, Artificial Intelligence, advanced computing, mobile networks, unmanned and autonomous systems, and social media present a military revolution in information warfare. To leverage its full potential, militaries need cultural changes to reconcile institutional aversion toward non-lethal information warfare. To aggressively shape, influence, control, and manipulate information, change is essential in military mind sets toward information warfare. This can be realized through better training and education, and deliberate integration of information operations across the military services during planning and operations.<sup>13</sup>

The nation and armed forces need IW structures to effectively exploit the IW domain as an integral component of our war fighting strategy as also counter the inimical designs of our adversaries. The PMO with the NSA as the pointsman should head the integrated IW Board comprising of the three operations chiefs of the services ie DGMO, VCAS, VCNS, Director General Defence Intelligence Agency, Director General Information Warfare, secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Home, External Affairs, Finance and I&B. The IW board should also appoint eminent media persons either as members or advisors. The IW Board should draw its authority and take directions from the CCS and function directly under the PMO. The IW board should have the requisite mandate, authority and constitutional sanctions to project and protect Indian national interests.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://thedailyguardian.com/galwan-chinas-information-war/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WrVkxJvDBglACrKqabgjPoXVhxGnIJ9cGyOK-a1Ox4/edit>

<sup>14</sup> [https://cenjows.in/upload\\_images/pdf/Synergy\\_Aug\\_2019\\_BW.pdf](https://cenjows.in/upload_images/pdf/Synergy_Aug_2019_BW.pdf), Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia



At the services level the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) should have the mandate and authority to synergise IW. The need is to raise a Director General Information Warfare under the IDS with three verticals, Additional Director Generals of Social Media, Psychological Operations and Public Information. The Armed forces should not shy away from appointing subject matter experts in the three verticals and should willingly accept the induction of media and other experts as an integral part of IW.<sup>15</sup>

Although the disengagement process has commenced it is a long road ahead. This is a wake up call for India. A growing India can not afford to be threatened by China everytime China perceives a threat to its interests or wants India to toe its narrative and support its positions. For India territorial integrity and sovereignty are non negotiable. While India aims to ensure the wellbeing of its 1.35 billion people transforming to a 5 trillion economy, she can achieve these aims only if there is continued peace. Peace in the Indian context can only be achieved through preparedness specially so in the Military domain, soft power and diplomacy have to be backed by hard power. China respects strength, hence India will have to deal with China from a position of strength. China has gone wrong in its assessment of India's resolute response this time, as it bit more than it could chew. Next time China will factor India's response, and hence it is imperative that India is fully prepared.

China will do well to realise and recognise that it now faces a new India, a responsible, risen, and resurgent India, a global leader with a say in many multilateral forums and world bodies. Having lost the trust post Galwan, China will need to be aware of India's sensitivities and treat as an equal, however for that India will need to prepare from the new and immediate threat of an aggressive China.

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<sup>15</sup> [https://cenjows.in/upload\\_images/pdf/Synergy\\_Aug\\_2019\\_BW.pdf](https://cenjows.in/upload_images/pdf/Synergy_Aug_2019_BW.pdf), Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia

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