

The Undercurrents along LoC and LAC

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Despite clearer border arrangements with Pakistan, the Indo-China border has been more peaceful.

\n

- This calls for a nuanced analysis of the tactical differences involved.

\n

\n\n

How does the disputed Indo-Pak border fare?

\n\n

\n

- **Ceasefire Line Era** - India and Pakistan have unsettled border disputes in the Jammu & Kashmir sector, which is a legacy of the 1948 war.

\n

- When peace was agreed, a ceasefire line (CFL) was also demarcated mutually, which was marked on the maps and jointly surveyed by both the armies.

\n

- This CFL, with minor variations, became the Line of Control (LoC) after the Shimla Agreement, which followed the 1971 war for Bangladeshi liberation.

\n

- The new nomenclature was meant to show that J&K was a bilateral dispute between the Pakistani and Indian, which would have to be resolved mutually.

\n

- **Line of Control Era** - LoC remained largely peaceful since Shimla, until the worsening of internal security situation in J&K in the 90s changed it.

\n

- While the J&K crisis itself was largely attributed to Pakistan, Kargil and the subsequent cross border aggressions opened up direct confrontations.

\n

- While things became peaceful again with the 2003 ceasefire, by late 2015, the LoC started heating up again.

\n

- Notably, 2017 was particularly bad with as much as 860 ceasefire violations

and 32 soldier deaths.

\n

\n\n

How did India evolve its border arrangement with China?

\n\n

\n

- Border disputes between Indian and China culminated in the 1962 Sino-Indian war, and no border arrangement was agreed upon in the subsequent peace.

\n

- Notably, China was able to assert its control over disputed territories, particularly in Ladakh (Aksai Chin).

\n

- While the concept of “Line of Actual Control” (LAC) came about in a bilateral agreement in 1993, there was no concrete settlement on ground positions.

\n

- Significantly, India and China have differing views on where the LAC lies and even its total perceived length by both sides are at a glaring variance.

\n

- Despite these confusing ground realities, the last ever violent clash recorded was in 1975, when an Assam Rifles patrol was ambushed and killed.

\n

- But notably, besides minor clashes between patrols, tense border standoffs have occurred in “Sumdorong Chu in 1987, Depsang in 2013, Chumar in 2014 and Doklam in 2017”.

\n

\n\n

What is causing this LoC - LAC anomaly?

\n\n

\n

- While there is no clear LAC demarcation, military commanders concede that both sides understand and agree on the other’s perception for 95% of the LAC.

\n

- Also, the mechanisms for border management between India and China, has been well defined and formalised, which include ceremonial border gatherings.

\n

- Moreover, a lot of quiet informal strategic meetings, coordinated

humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training exercises also happen regularly.

\n

- Contrarily, such structures haven't evolved in the Indo-Pak LoC, mainly due to the mutual deep-rooted hostility between India and Pakistan.

\n

- Both armies perceive each other as cultural and historic enemies, which has been reinforced through current political narratives.

\n

- The fact that Pakistan is actively aiding militancy in Kashmir and the speculation that it is covertly sponsoring terrorism elsewhere in India only reinforces hatred.

\n

\n\n

What needs to be done?

\n\n

\n

- Each incident stokes anger on either side, and an unending cycle of retributive violence is set in motion, which can have dangerous consequences.

\n

- While the border ranks view stand-offs with the Chinese as a professional call of duty, the Pakistan case is seen through an emotional and personal prism.

\n

- Reducing emotional rhetoric is indeed difficult but is crucial in easing tensions at the border, which both sides must realise.

\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

