

Political Committee
Graded Model United Nations 2017



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

It's a great honor to be chairing the Political Committee at the 2017 session of Graded Model United Nations. This committee will allow delegates to creatively address the topic at hand. While there is an expectation for a high level of debate on Tuesday, we also hope that delegates will feel confident and relaxed enough to make this a productive and educational session.

The Political Committee will allow delegates to discuss the multifaceted Sino-Indian border dispute that has been unresolved for decades. We deliberately chose a controversial topic that hasn't had a predominant presence in the news, allowing you to challenge yourselves in committee while representing your respective nations. A two-sided debate is expected.

While in session, we hope delegates will be able to gain a better sense of regional politics and social ideologies that directly impact governmental policy building. Delegates are expected to submit a position paper for the committee via e-mail. It's also highly encouraged that delegates arrive with draft resolutions and comprehensive knowledge of the subject at hand.

We look forward to seeing you all in action on Tuesday. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact us.

Best of luck,

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SCOPE OF COMMITTEE

The Political Committee considers all international and diplomatic matters within the scope of the [Charter](#) or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations. The Committee strives to solve the world's most pressing issues involving corruption, constitutional immorality, border lawlessness, etc.. Through the promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of conflicts amongst member states, the Political Committee ventures in providing the international community with solidity and safety.



ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) delegates discussing civil and political rights in 2015.

Committee Topic: Resolving the Sino-Indian Border Dispute



[The Sino-Indian Border](#)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While the world's focus is turned towards the escalating crisis situation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, another conflict with just as disastrous consequences is developing in Asia. The 3,500 kilometer (2,220 mile) border between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India is geographically desolate and mostly inhospitable. The border lies partly on the Himalayan mountain range, which is also adjacent to Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Sino-Indian border has been a hotspot for increasing tension recently. Both nations are armed with nuclear arsenals and the threat of war has been building since June 2017. China is fighting to be the dominant power in Asia, while India is challenging their claim and asking to be treated as an equal.

China and India last clashed over the shared Himalayan border during the 1962 Sino-Indian War. Aside from the disputed control over the Himalayan border, the 1959 Tibetan uprising and India's asylum grant to the Dalai Lama, among other reasons, inspired Chinese forces to launch offensives in Ladakh and across the McMahon Line on October 20, 1962. The conflict ended one month later away after China retreated from one of the two disputed areas and called for a ceasefire. Much of this war occurred away from the public eye, as it began during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

The area of Doklam represents many of the issues surrounding border controversy in the region. The border in Doklam is defined by a self-contradictory treaty signed in 1890. The Sino-Bhutanese border is defined by a watershed and several mountain passes. Bhutan and India both claim that such landmarks are found at the Batang-La pass. However, the treaty also mentions the Gyumtshen pass further South, leaving the location of the true border ambiguous.

Tussles between Indian and Chinese troops have been on the rise in recent months. On August 15, Chinese soldiers attempted to enter Indian sovereign territory in Kashmir, Ladakh and Jammu. Both nations have also been amassing troops at the Donglang border over the past two months, where China has defended its right to build a road on territory claimed by both nations that would separate Bhutan and India.

While neither military have fired shots at each other in half a century, troop movement between imprecise borders has resulted in threats and stone-throwing between armed soldiers. In a speech marking India's 70th anniversary since gaining independence from the United Kingdom, Prime

Minister Modi remarked that his nation was "strong enough to overcome those who try to act against our country," a clear attack on Chinese troops amassing on the border.



An Indian girl poses next to a sign advocating goodwill between India and China.

Past UN's Actions

There exists very little United Nations legal history on the Sino-Indian border dispute.

The most recent and notable mention of the situation was in UN Security Council resolution 2344 (2017), adopted at the Council's 7092nd meeting on March 17th, 2017. Clause 34 of the resolution states "Welcomes and urges further efforts to strengthen the process of regional economic cooperation, including measures to facilitate regional connectivity, trade and transit, including through regional development initiatives such as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road) Initiative [...]" The cited project includes the CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) through Kashmir and Azad Jammu. Its mention in the resolution on the extension of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's mandate has caused it to receive backing, raising concerns in India and other nations who have strong feelings about the project.

Case Study #1: Aksai Chin

The territory of Aksai Chin – currently managed by China – is just one of the many smaller territories that are being disputed amongst the Sino-Indian border. Although the Hotan Prefecture, led by Chinese representatives from the region of Xinjiang, has nearly full dominance over Aksai Chin, India also claims that this territory is a section of the Ladakh region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.



Outline of the Aksai Chin.

In the year of 1962, India and China fought a small war in dispute for Aksai Chin. 31 years later, both countries signed an agreement that assured the Line of Actual Control – a demarcation line that attempts to separate Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.

The Macartney–Macdonald Line

In addition, Aksai Chin has been faced with several border modifications. In 1893, British authorities established boundaries within the Lingzi Tang plains – which are south of the Lakhsang range, in India – and Aksai Chin proper, which is north of the Lakhsang range, in China.

Until 1908, Britain took the Macartney–Macdonald Line as the official boundary of the Aksai Chin territory. Despite that, following the 1911 Xinhai Revolution in China and World War I, the British relied upon a different demarcation named the *Johnson Line*.

The Johnson Line

Created by civil sergeant William Johnson, his work was severely criticized for gross inaccuracies, with authorities describing his boundary as "patently absurd." However, to this day, British and Indian authorities rely on the Johnson Line as the *official* and legitimized border for the Aksai Chin territory.

POSITION OF MAJOR NATIONS AND BLOCS

China

The government of China remains ruthless amidst the ongoing border standoff with India. Being keenly adjusted to Chinese foreign policy, Doklam continues to be heavily controlled by military force from both sides. The President of China, Xi Jinping, believes that inserting armed soldiers in the region serves as a means of stabilizing the hostile atmosphere in Doklam. In addition, this also eases China's process of taking over the Chicken's Neck territory and its broader surroundings from the Indian government. Lastly, the Chinese expansionist method of foreign policy (exemplified by the ongoing South China Sea issue) has paved the way for more dispute within the Sino-Indian border.

India

India has adopted a clear reactionary stance towards the circumstances in Doklam. Ever since Chinese authorities attempted in building a road through the plateau, Indian representatives have sent more than 50,000 troops to be in constant patrol of the area, in an effort to prevent further incursions from the Chinese government. Last Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said that "India has 'slapped its own face' by deciding to build a road near Pangong Lake in Ladakh," arguing that this would only worsen the Doklam dispute.

United States of America

Based off of recent events involving Chinese authorities and the Trump administration, the United States is certainly more inclined in advocating India's territory under Prime Minister Modi's jurisdiction. Following the U.S. sanction of China, the Communist Party in the PRC has

established a significant degree of animosity between Mr. Trump and the current president of China Xi Jinping.

United Kingdom

Ever since India's achievement of independence from British authorities in 1947, their foreign policy remains ungracious towards Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For that reason, the UK's involvement serves as their political expedient of regaining the territory that they have controlled for over 200 years.

Pakistan

After the ineffectiveness of the Simla Agreement, which sought to create diplomacy within Pakistani authorities and India, their animosity towards each other continues to be the main part of their uneasy relation.

Russia

Once the *Convention of Calcutta* between the United Kingdom and China was acted upon, thereby preventing any Russian intervention into the Indian Empire due to the establishment of a buffer zone (or an area intended to separate two armies that are fighting), Russia has remained with a pro-Indian stance in this issue.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How will delegates establish legal precedent over an issue that has not been previously debated at the UN in depth?
- How will delegates use and address old and inaccurate maps, treaties and other legal documents that demarcate borders?
- How will delegates address conflicts over ideologies and religions, related to the asylum granted by India to the Dalai Lama?
- How will delegates address the economic aspects of the issue and the economic investment risks that come with an armed conflict?
- How will delegates address infrastructure projects and investments that cross borders and economic corridors in the region?
- To what extent should the the UN modify or reaffirm international law as targets towards combatting border conflicts, such as the [Counter-Terrorism](#) Committee in the UNSC?

DEFINITION OF USEFUL TERMS

Doklam

Also referred to as *Zhoglam* (and *Donglang* in China), *Doklam* is an area located in between Tibet's Chumbi Valley, the Haa Valley in Bhutan, and India's state of Sikkim. Although this area is geographically located in Bhutan, Chinese authorities have constantly claimed their authority over it. After many years of negotiation, this dispute has not yet reached any conclusion. In June of 2017, a military standoff between Indian soldiers and China occurred in Doklam as a result of President Xi Jinping's attempt in extending a road towards the valley. Bhutan has denied any road construction in the Sino-Indian border region.

Convention of Calcutta

This convention occurred in the city of *Calcutta* in India, which changed its name in 2001 to *Kolkata*. Set in 1890, this convention involved two world powers – China and the United Kingdom of Great Britain in Island. During that same year in March 17th, the UK and China formed a treaty aimed at the opening of markets of Tibet and China. Together, they sought to stimulate trade for all countries involved. Simultaneously, the United Kingdom decided to establish a neutral area serving to separate hostile forces into their British-led Indian empire in order to prevent Russian intervention. The treaty was signed by Governor-General of India Lord Lansdowne and the Chinese *Amban*.

Partition of India

The Partition of India was the subdivision of British India in 1947 following the Indian Independence Act of 1947. Consequently, this act caused the displacement of approximately 12 million people along religious lines, setting upon extensive refugee crises in the newly constituted states. Along with that, there was large-scale violence, with estimates of loss of life accompanying or preceding the partition varying between several hundred thousand and two million.

Siliguri Corridor

Also referred to as the "Chicken's Neck," the Siliguri Corridor is a large piece of land located in between Bangladesh, Nepal, Sikkim (Indian State), Bhutan, the Chumbi Valley, and West Bengal (Indian State). The Chicken's Neck represents a political authenticity that is essential to Bangladesh. After the Partition of India, the Siliguri Corridor served as the only bridge between the northeastern part of India and the rest of its states. In 1975, the Corridor was annexed by India, thus consolidating their control over the Chumbi Valley. Since then, the area heavily consists of various sections of Indian military, such as the Indian Army and the West Bengal Police. Starting in September of 2011, an agreement made between India and Bangladesh under their preconceived trade treaty of 1980 dictated that a new region – the Tatalia Corridor – would be established in order to, as explained by the document itself, "make mutually beneficial arrangements for the use of their waterways, railways and roadways for commerce between the two countries and for passage of goods between two places in one country through the territory of the other."



The Siliguri Corridor

Simla Agreement

In 1972, following the Bangladeshi Liberation war of 1971 that led to the independence of Bangladesh, both India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement – a treaty that addressed the urgent need of diplomacy within both countries. Despite this promise, the agreement was ratified by the Indian and Pakistani Parliaments in the same year. As a result, their animosity towards each other remained.

FURTHER RESEARCH

- [Timeline of Sino-Indian Relations](#)
- [Timeline of Indian-Chinese Ties](#)
- [History of the Sino-Indian Border Dispute](#)
- [Timeline of the Dispute over Sikkim](#)
- [How a road on China and India's border led to the two powers' worst stand-off in decades](#)
- [China will protect border with India at all costs](#)
- [A border standoff between 2 nuclear powers has been festering for months](#)

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