

'READY TO WORK WITH INDIA TO ENHANCE MUTUAL TRUST': CHINA REACTS TO PM'S I-DAY SPEECH

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NEW DELHI: China on Monday said it was ready to work with [India](#) to enhance mutual trust and properly manage differences adding that the "right path" ahead for the two countries is to respect each other.

The Chinese foreign ministry made these comments while reacting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech on Saturday in which he said the country's territorial integrity was supreme.

"From LoC (Line of Control) to LAC (Line of Actual Control), anyone who casts an eye on the sovereignty of the country, the armed forces have responded in the language they understand," Modi had said. The prime minister had also referred to the border clash in eastern Ladakh but without naming China.

Asked to comment on Modi's speech, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said: "We have noted Prime Minister Modi's speech. We are close neighbours, we are all emerging countries with over one billion people."

"So the sound development of bilateral ties not only serves the interest of the two peoples but also stability, peace, prosperity of the region and the whole world. The right path for the two sides is to respect and support each other as this serves our long-term interests," Zhao said.

"So, China stands ready to work with India to enhance our political mutual trust, properly manage our differences, step-up practical cooperation and safeguard the long-term development of bilateral ties," he said.

It is unclear whether these words could imply that China was willing to step back from the places it had intruded into, across the LAC in Ladakh. Tensions between the two sides have been running high since early May when the Chinese intrusions were first detected. Ties plunged to a low after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash with Chinese soldiers on 15 June at Galwan. Chinese soldiers were also killed but the numbers are yet to be made public. The clashes -- the first in 45 years to result in casualties -- shattered trust between the two countries.

So far China has put the blame for the Galwan clash on India and also stated that there is no violation of the LAC – a sign that its troops intend to stay put in areas they have intruded into. India on its part has been insisting that the Chinese troops go back to positions they occupied in April – ie before the intrusions.

Five rounds of talks at the military level and three at the diplomatic level between China and India have not yielded any results. Last week, the Indian foreign ministry said more talks were expected in the coming days to resolve the stalemate.

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