

ROAD AHEAD FROM GOGRA: ON INDIA-CHINA DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - China

After the talks on July 31, [India and China have taken one more step towards restoring peace and normalcy on the LAC by disengaging at Gogra](#). It is, however, only one step, and the road ahead towards returning to the status quo of April 2020, before the tensions of last summer upended years of a carefully managed even if uneasy peace along the LAC, remains uncertain. [It has taken 12 rounds of military-level talks](#) to see both sides disengage and put in place buffer zones in the Galwan Valley, the site of the June 2020 clash that marked the worst violence since 1967, Pangong Lake, and now Patrolling Point 17 in Gogra. The disengagement process at PP17 took place on August 4 and 5, with a return to permanent bases. The next round of talks will discuss PP15 in Hot Springs, Demchok, where China has transgressed in relatively smaller [numbers than the deployments seen in Pangong Lake](#), also remains unresolved. Beijing has appeared unwilling to discuss the strategically significant Depsang plains, where the Chinese side has been blocking Indian patrols. The buffer zone model, where both sides temporarily cease patrolling in disputed areas, has appeared to work so far in keeping the peace. It is, however, only a temporary measure, and one that India should not accept as permanent as it would prevent India from enforcing its territorial claims and favour the PLA, which can deploy faster in larger numbers owing to more favourable terrain and better logistics.

The next step will be full de-escalation, and a withdrawal of some of the new forward deployments that have come up close to the LAC. India has signalled that it is prepared for the long haul; its message: relations cannot return to normal without a full restoration of normalcy on the borders. While the strategic motivations of China's border deployments last year are not clear, the tactical objectives are not difficult to ascertain. Since the 2017 Doklam crisis, China has consistently stepped up building new permanent airbases and air defence units closer to the LAC, with at least 13 new positions coming up since then, according to an analysis of satellite images from Stratfor. India has been moving to rapidly upgrade its own infrastructure to close the gap. The result is an entirely changed security dynamic along the LAC. There is a need to come up urgently with new protocols and confidence-building measures, as both sides gradually resume patrolling in the buffer zones. The multiple transgressions by China and the violence of last year have set back years of efforts to carefully manage the borders and thrown into doubt whether the four agreements regulating the behaviour of both sides still remain valid. While the recent moves towards restoring the peace are certainly welcome, finding a more long-lasting solution to ensure peace along the LAC will present a taller challenge.

[Our code of editorial values](#)

From the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, to the landmark Ayodhya verdict, 2019 proved to be an eventful year.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com