

FORGOTTEN IN THE FOG OF WAR, THE LAST FIRING ON THE INDIA-CHINA BORDER

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - China

Last shot: Soldiers keeping watch on the India-China border at Bum La, a few dozen kilometres from Tulung La. APAnupam Nath

The 1967 clash between India and China is often remembered as the last shot fired on the India-China border.

That clash in Sikkim, where India got the better of China just five years after defeat in the 1962 war, saw more than 80 Indian soldiers killed while estimates say 400 Chinese soldiers may have been killed.

1967 clashes

If it is true that 1967 marked the last major fighting that saw casualties on both sides, it was not, however, the last incident of a shot being fired on the contested boundary.

That would happen eight years later, when a patrol of Assam Rifles jawans was ambushed by the Chinese at Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh. Four were killed.

“We often remember 1967, but to say that was the last firing, and that what happened eight years later was some sort of accident does not square with the facts,” said Nirupama Rao, a former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to China. “It was an ambush, plain and simple, and four of ours lost their lives.”

The Indian government maintained that the Chinese had crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and ambushed the patrol on October 20, 1975. The Chinese denied this and blamed India for the incident.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing accused the patrol of crossing the LAC and firing at a Chinese post. The Ministry handed a protest note on October 22 to the Charge d’Affaires of the Indian Embassy in Beijing describing China’s actions as “a self defence response”, according to a November 3 report in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, that was shared with *The Hindu* by Saurabh Vashist, a researcher on India-China relations. The report said India recovered their bodies a week later on October 28.

U.S. cable

A U.S. State Department cable from 1975 noted India’s view that the “Chinese ambush was sprung 500 metres south of Tulung La” and took place on Indian territory.

It quoted a senior Indian military intelligence officer as saying on November 5 the border there was very clear, marked by a distinctive shale cliff.

He said China had moved up a company to the pass and detached a platoon which erected stone walls on India’s side of the pass, and from there fired several hundred rounds at the patrol. Four of the patrol had gone into a leading position, while two others, who escaped, had stayed behind. The officer said the patrol was routine and had been in the area several times before.

The cable noted that Tulung La was among the more remote passes in the region, a few dozen kilometres from Bum La and Tawang. It noted China had used the pass during the 1962 war as a channel to send its troops down to Bomdi La, to defeat the Indian resistance there to their offensive.

“Although the Chinese appear to be following their policy of enforcing the status quo with respect to the LAC pending negotiations,” the cable concluded, “they apparently still lay claim to Arunachal Pradesh down to the foothills”.

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Start your 14 days trial now. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or Subscribe to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com