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New Delhi, March 27: A relatively minor but nevertheless significant event, which has aroused some new hopes of an impending thaw in Sino-Indian relations, is the sudden suspension of the loud-speaker warfare across the strategic mountain passes of Nathu La, Jelep La and Cho La on the Sikkim border where the Indian and Chinese troops face each other at the eye level in a state of constant alert all the year round. The Chinese have abruptly stopped the provocative propaganda campaign they have been carrying on relentlessly since the mid-sixties in a futile attempt to brainwash the Indian troops and foment discord between the officers and jawans by ridiculing their class distinctions. The Indian Army retaliated with its own counter-propaganda drive sneering at Chinese communism with satirical skits interspersed with lilting pop music taped in the Far East for drawing out the intensely indoctrinated but otherwise home-sick Chinese troops stationed in the wilderness of the Chumbi valley along these mountain heights. And over the years a sort of sardonic humour had developed over this semi-musical warfare which often helped to relieve the tensions of the opposing forces on this bitterly cold front. The Chinese decision to call off this loud-speaker warfare followed the recent suspension of the daily anti-Indian tirades over Peking Radio which has lately been paying very little attention to the political developments in the sub-continent other than broadcasting routine news items. The policymakers in Delhi took the cue for what it was worth and made the reciprocal gesture of discontinuing the Indian counter-propaganda campaign.

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