

**Feed opium to The Dragon**  
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**PRESENT** selective intrusions by the Chinese Army on the Indo-China border has raised anxiety levels in all sections of Indian Society. The aggressive and obtrusive manner of the intrusions is as though somebody at the higher echelons of the Chinese establishment has ordered acupuncture like thrusts at selected points, on the Indo-China border to ascertain reactions of the Indian Military, government and media. The vociferous coverage by the media was beyond the Chinese expectations. Stung by the aggressive media blitz, the Chinese are cautiously defensive, by attributing such intrusions to faulty demarcation as well as non-demarcation of international boundaries. Whatever be the reason, real or imagined, the nature of the intrusions, behavior of the intruders and their actions, suggest that the level and scale of operations were conducted only with the tacit clearance and connivance of top Chinese officials.

Indian reactions have bordered on the panic, probably fuelled by the belief that there is a treacherous element lurking in the Chinese, which is capable of being unleashed at unsuspecting moments. The Indo-China war of 1962 is cited as proof of the latent treachery lying embedded in the Chinese character, imprinting on them, the stamp of unreliability.

Chinese greed for land compels them to visualize vast stretches of Indian territory as being unmarked and ill defined and therefore capable of being annexed using military coercion. British cartographical errors is often cited as the reason for China's perceived land deficiency. The cartographical errors are not just marginal border adjustments, but encompasses the entire states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh! Chinese assessment of British Cartographers skill and comprehension must be abysmally low, if their land claims are to be believed.

What was once the Indo-Tibetan border has morphed into the Indo-China border on account of the annexation of Tibet by China. Still dissatisfied, forays into Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh is being actively contemplated and conceptualized to encroach and annex new territories. While Tibetans dream of independence, the Chinese dream of further southward expansion into India.

To repel a Chinese Military invasion, often, unannounced and brazenly aggressive is not going to be an easy task. There is a justified fear in the minds of the Indians that another diabolical treachery by the Chinese can be well anticipated. It is not just about stalling another treacherous aggression, but, when and how to regain the losses of 1962, that is uppermost in the minds of the Indian public. If cartographers messing around with borders are responsible for China's diminished land assets then what about India's losses? Once upon a time India's border extended beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan in the West and in the East the Chola Kings held sway up to Cambodia. Can India also not cite cartographical errors and claim new domains? Then, the world map itself would have to be redrawn. **Can historical land dimensions of past, be reckoned, as vital parameters, for present day international borders? Are we preparing the ground work for World War III ?**

Wars connote fears for everyone everywhere. The new unknown threat of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) warfare looms in the minds of the public as indicative of doomsday. Aggression can only lead to destruction of mindless proportions. Yet, how to tackle an obdurate aggressor having intemperate expansionist designs?

History, gives important clues about the weaknesses of an enemy. Unfortunately, we in

India do not read History correctly. We are satisfied with reading misinformation and distortions. Consequently, our forefathers have been unjustly deprived of their share of credit in historical events and resultantly we Indians have no pride in our past whatsoever. Hence, every time a Chinese border patrol strays into our territory, there is an inexplicable panic reaction. We are in shock and awe when these patrols litter our territory with used cigarettes and dare to paint the name of their country on our rocks. Had we known our past history we could have dared them and we would have certainly dared them, for our forefathers humbled them not once but twice! I refer to the Opium Wars also known as the Anglo-Chinese wars that lasted from 1839 to 1842 and the Arrow war from 1856 to 1860.

The Opium Wars wrecked and devastated China. Few events in the history of the international Narcotics trade are more tragic than the Opium Wars that decimated China in the nineteenth century. The West found a Chinese weakness for Opium. The history of Poppy in China was officially prepared by order of the English Inspector General of Foreign Customs in China. The First Opium War resulted in the cession of Hong Kong to Britain and the opening of five treaty ports, namely, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai. Other European countries also, later extracted concessions from the Chinese.

The Second Opium war or Arrow war, saw Britain and France in alliance against China. **The Chinese were further compelled to grant a variety of trading privileges.**

The Opium Wars reduced China into utter poverty and penury. It became one of the poorest countries in the world and came to be called "**Sick Man of the East**". Seven generations of Chinese became drug addicts. It had an extremely profound impact on all the Chinese, socially, culturally, psychologically and genetically to this day. The Chinese themselves describe this period as a "Whole century of humiliation".

But, who and what caused this century of humiliation? Many may find it unbelievable, but the naked truth is that, Indian Opium and Indian soldiers wrecked China! From the imperial palace, including the last Chinese Empress to the lowly labourers, China collapsed because of Indian opium!

Britain had made India into an international warehouse for opium. By 1836, eight million pounds of opium were smuggled into China. Millions of Chinese became opium addicts. By 1820, just one city of Soochow alone had 100,000 drug addicts. Nine out of 10 people in Guangdong and Fujian provinces were drug addicts. China was completely corrupted and weakened by Indian Opium.

Equally, creditable was the role of Indian Soldiers. British Commander, Major General Sir Hugh Gough led the battalions comprising of 1 company Madras Rifles, 2nd Madras Native Infantry, 6th Madras Native Infantry, 14th Madras Native Infantry and the Bengal Army. The unit of the Madras Foot Artillery served with distinction and was awarded the honour title "Dragon". It was during the first Opium War that the Unit captured a Chinese Dragon Cannon.

In the Second opium war in 1860, four brigades of Indian Infantry - Sikh Regiment, Madras Regiment, Bombay Native Infantry and the Ludhiana Rifles took part in the sacking of the Summer Palace. Yuanmingyuan, the imperial summer palace of the Qing Dynasty, nicknamed "China's Versaille", once boasted the largest royal garden in the world, was ruined by Indian soldiers. Opium Wars finally caused the overthrow of the Chinese Ching Dynasty.

In 1904, Indian troops were part of the military expedition led by British Commander

Young Husband that seized Lhasa. The incredible role of Indian opium along with the valour of Indian soldiers, spelt havoc for the Chinese. The Opium Wars constitute a dark and inglorious chapter in Chinese history. Presently, the old Indo-China trade routes are once again open, the same Indian opium that led to the downfall of the Ching dynasty still continues to grow and flourish in India. The great American Philosopher Santayana once remarked "***Those who do not read History are condemned to repeat it.***" The Chinese need to refresh their History; otherwise the Dragon has to be made to taste Indian Opium once again. Let us therefore prepare to feed Opium to the next intruding Chinese patrol party.

**(The views expressed are strictly personal)**