

- **Undesirable military escalation:** A direct fight with India does not suit Beijing's interests. In-fact carrying out minor military expeditions to inflict small-scale military defeats on India precisely suits the Chinese political and military leadership as they are cost effective, less escalatory and the message gets conveyed.
- **Political constraints:** If India loses territorial areas during a limited war, then there is a possibility of the political establishment regaining territories through non-conventional (all-out war/nuclear weapons) means. The Chinese realise the deterrence of having a nuclear armed neighbour.
- **Tit for tat tactics by India:** There are several places along the several thousand kilometres long LAC where the PLA is militarily weak. The Indian Army can retaliate back along those places.
- **Maritime domain:** China enjoys continental superiority over India but maritime domain is China's weak spot. Further, the maritime space is crucial to Beijing's commercial and energy interest.
- **Economic front:** Beijing's interest does not lie in damaging the \$100 billion trade with India with its military adventurism.

### **Does India need a new China Policy ?**

Previous Indian governments have followed the approach of Quiet diplomacy coupled with strong military posture to deal with Chinese incursions. However, they have also been criticized for allowing the adversary a way out.

#### **Depsang incursion 2013:**

- The Indian government had privately conveyed to China that an upcoming visit by China's Premier would be off if the stand-off didn't end.
- The key to arriving at a successful outcome was keeping public rhetoric calm and steady and displaying strength and giving the adversary a way out.

#### **Chunar stand-off 2014:**

- India quietly but forcefully stopped the Chinese road-building and deployed 2,500 soldiers which outnumbered the People's Liberation Army (PLA). As a result, PLA withdrew.
- Both sides disengaged and followed a moratorium on patrolling into contested areas for months.

#### **Doklam crisis 2017:**

- Indian troops crossed over into Bhutan to stop a Chinese road construction on territory India sees as Bhutanese and accused China of unilaterally altering the India-Bhutan-China trijunction.
- Restoring status quo: Beijing demanded an unconditional withdrawal. Both sides disengaged without divulging the terms. It later emerged that the deal struck resulted in India withdrawing first and then China stopped construction.