

VETERANS STATEMENT ON CHINA

July 2, 2020

To:

The President of India

The Prime Minister of India

The Raksha Mantri

Chief of the Defence Staff

Chief of the Army Staff

Chief of the Naval Staff

Chief of the Air Staff

By email to: secy.president@rb.nic.in; us.petitions@rb.nic.in; presidentofindia@rb.nic.in; usgrievance@rb.nic.in; pmosb@pmo.nic.in; pmindia@pmindia.nic.in; rmo@mod.nic.in; mos-defence@gov.in; secy-defence@nic.in; defsecy@nic.in; cds.sectt@gov.in; webmaster.indianarmy@nic.in; coas-india@nic.in; cns-india@nic.in; cas-india@nic.in;

We, the signatories, are all Veterans of the Indian Armed Forces, who have served in the defence of our nation in various ranks and appointments in peacetime and in operational/war zones, over the past several decades.

We do not represent any group or political party, and each of us only has the best interest of our country and our Armed Forces at heart in making this Statement. We therefore request that our respectful comments, requests and urgings in the following paragraphs be taken in that spirit alone.

1. The Chinese PLA build-up in Galwan and other places in Aksai Chin, and the recent events in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh, have raised very serious concern among Armed Forces Veterans.
2. The loss of twenty Jawans, including the CO, Colonel Santosh Babu, on June 15/16 in the Galwan valley is deeply disturbing and raises many questions. The earlier incident in Eastern Ladakh on 05 May 2020, where a Colonel, a Major and Jawans were wounded by similar action by the Chinese, adds to our concerns, as it surely would to all Indians and Government of India.
3. The incident at Galwan could only have happened because of failure at one or more levels in the political, civil and military establishments, especially in continuous intelligence acquisition and dissemination. While we accept that failures can happen in any system, in the current instance either our intelligence system was found wanting, or the intelligence which it obtained did not reach the field units in time. We therefore urge that our nation's intelligence system be urgently revamped.

4. A formal statement issued by the Army or by Government soon after the unfortunate Galwan incident of 15/16 June, would have laid rumors and guesses at rest. It would have prevented China from taking advantage of contradictions between ambiguous or inaccurate verbal statements needing later clarifications. We therefore urge that in the event of such future situations, only formal statements be issued so that the Indian public is not confused and the aggressor nation does not gain political advantage.

5. India urgently needs a stated national policy and strategy on Neighbourhood Management, concerning all India's immediate and more distant neighbours, but especially China and Pakistan. Formulation of such a national policy and strategy has been neglected by successive governments. We request that this be immediately initiated so as to safely guide our political, military, bureaucratic and diplomatic establishments to establish stable relations with our neighbours, small and large, friendly or inimical. Having an over-arching national policy and strategy will reduce casualties among our troops, which occur due to the heightened risk of being reactive to conflict situations created by China or Pakistan.

6. A Fact-finding Body needs to be immediately instituted regarding the intrusions, incursions and encroachments by China in Aksai Chin (Depsang, Galwan, Pangong Tso, etc.) and also elsewhere on our long borders with China, up to Arunachal Pradesh in the East. We request that the Report of this Fact-finding Body be tabled in the Lok Sabha within a time-bound framework.

7. We also strongly urge that the un-redacted Henderson Brooks-Bhagat Report concerning the 1962 war against China be released into the public domain, so that the military-bureaucratic-political system and the public can learn from the mistakes of the past. There can be no sensible reason for this Report remaining secret even after 57 years.

8. We urge that government should take very early steps towards concluding Boundary Agreements with all our neighbours, but especially China and Pakistan, by employing all available diplomatic means and pressures, together with the power of India's membership position for 2021-22 in the UN Security Council. This does not in any manner imply reduction in deployment of our Armed Forces or let-up in our intelligence systems, but it will enable us to better attend to development for our people within our country.

9. We further urge that in the domestic context, proactive steps be taken to use non-electoral political tools of consultation, discussion and negotiation in all domestic disputes and situations instead of coercion and force, as it will strengthen our nation's integrity and resolve to face any and all aggressive designs by inimical and aggressive neighbours. These steps will enable state and central governments to devote more attention and resources towards development for our people within our country.

10. As military Veterans who have served our nation for decades, we would like to bring the following points to the attention of the President of India who is also the Supreme Commander of our Armed Forces, the Prime Minister of India, and the Armed Forces Leadership:

i) Over the decades, a substantial portion of the Army has been continuously deployed in its secondary role on internal security (IS) and Counter-insurgency (CI) duties, at the cost of availability of troops for the Army's primary role of defence of territorial sovereignty. At the same time, large strength of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) are deployed in border areas in an essentially military role. This anomalous reversal of roles and duties now demands rationalization for efficiency and effectiveness in both internal and external national security.

ii) Dependence on foreign sources for critical hardware and critical software used in governance functions and the various sectors of our economy, especially the security forces (Armed Forces, Intelligence services, CAPFs and state police forces) makes India vulnerable to cyber-attack, which could be designed to hamper military operations. We urge that India needs to urgently invest in indigenous human, material and financial resources to manufacture its own hardware and software in adequate volumes, so as to avoid purchase from international vendors, especially for the command and control structure the Armed Forces and Intelligence services. We strongly urge that urgent steps need to be taken in this direction in the interest of national security.

iii) The Indian Armed Forces have been continuously deployed over decades for war/conflicts with neighbours and for internal security. Political solutions have not been sought in the past, but now need to be arrived at, because continuous deployment of the military can never be a long-term solution. We therefore urge non-military political solutions for both external and internal security, in the larger national interest.

11. We have one of the finest voluntary, disciplined, professional Armed Forces in the world. All personnel of India's Armed Forces take an oath which is unique to the Armed Forces, namely, to defend our nation even at peril to their lives, in active military operations, in harsh and high-risk field service conditions. The June 15/16 incident in Galwan valley resulting in death of 20 of our best and bravest, is only the most recent example.

12. The Armed Forces of India take pride in their secular credentials, which are part of their ethos, training and operations, and on the basis of which every soldier fights and dies as an Indian, without regard to his religion, caste, creed, state of origin. We believe that only this secular basis will more firmly integrate our diverse nation, and strongly urge that divisions on the basis of religion, caste or creed should be discouraged as a matter of policy. We urge our political leadership to adhere unwaveringly to the vision and spirit of the Constitution of India, which spells out the framework for our nation and its people

13. As we have done during our active service in the past, we assure you of standing in solidarity with our nation, the Constitution of India, the Government of India and our gallant Armed Forces, in facing the present aggression by China on our borders, and of continuing to do so in any situation in the future..

We the undersigned, endorse the above Statement:

Yours Faithfully,

(*Signed *)

1. Admiral Laxminarayan Ramdas, PVSM, AVSM, VrC, VSM
2. Lt Gen Suresh Samarth, AVSM
3. Lt Gen Narendra Aul, AVSM
4. Lt Gen Dasarathy Raghunath, PVSM, AVSM
5. Vice Admiral Madanjit Singh , PVSM AVSM
6. Vice Admiral Raman Prem Suthan, PVSM,AVSM,VSM
7. Air Marshal Nanda Cariappa, PVSM, VM
8. Maj Gen Ashu Sharma, VSM
9. Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM
10. Maj Gen Kulbir Dahiya,
11. Maj Gen Mohan Singh,
12. Maj Gen S.G.Vombatkere, VSM
13. Maj Gen BS Keron, VSM
14. Maj Gen Sishan Chohan,
15. Maj Gen Inderjit Kashyap,
16. Maj Gen Prakash Panjekar , VSM
17. Maj Gen Arun Chauhan,
18. Maj Gen Kulbir Dahiya,
19. Maj Gen M PS Kandal ,
20. Maj Gen Arun Srinivasan,
21. Rear Admiral Subhash Chandra Anand, AVSM
22. Air Vice Marshal Ram Prakash Mishra,
23. Brigadier Vangala H M Prasad,
24. Brigadier Anantha Narayanan,
25. Brigadier Pramod Kumar Bhalla,
26. Brigadier Atma Ram, COAS CC
27. Brigadier Satish Kumar, VSM
28. Brigadier Hiremagalur Gopal, AVSM
29. Brigadier NM Paul,
30. Brigadier Kamal Sood, VSM
31. Brigadier Israr Khan, KC
32. Brigadier Narendra Dabas,
33. Brigadier Jagat Pal Singh,
34. Brigadier Jawahar Kaul, COAS CC
35. Brigadier Satish Prakash Agarwal,
36. Brigadier Kartar Singh,
37. Brigadier Ved Pal Singh , VSM
38. Brigadier James M Devadoss, SM
39. Brigadier Manmohan Deshpande,
40. Brigadier Prem Hejmadi,
41. Brigadier Ranbir Sethi,
42. Commodore Mediona Bhada,
43. Commodore Omnath J Mathur, VSM
44. Commodore Dileep Gupte,
45. Commodore Rajinder Viro,
46. Commodore SI Thangam,
47. Air Commodore Shirish Dabadghao,
48. Air Commodore Manmohan Singh Duggal,
49. Col Jaswant Singh ,
50. Col Roy Chacko,
51. Col Lallan Singh,
52. Col Anil Sahgal,
53. Col Shekhar Singh,
54. Col HM Singh,
55. Col Vivek Bopiah,
56. Col Fredrick D'Sa, VSM
57. Col Krishnanunni Ravunniarath,
58. Col Ramesh Chandra Verma,
59. Col Rameshwar Lal Beniwal, SC
60. Col Edwin Jesudoss, GOC-in-C CC
61. Col Kartar Singh,
62. Col CS Kohli,
63. Col Bansi Kaul,
64. Col Bhadrans Ravi,
65. Col Milton Adhikari,
66. Col M S Krishnan,
67. Col Pavan Nair, VSM
68. Col PPS Kumaran, COAS CC
69. Col Atul Mehra ,
70. Col Nataraja Thiagarajan,
71. Col Sukhvinder Singh Khera ,
72. Col Kuldev Pathania ,
73. Col Abhaya Awasthi,
74. Col PK Vasudevan,
75. Col Satish Narula,
76. Col Manmohan Singh,
77. Col Manoj Tripathi,
78. Col Dinesh Kumar ,
79. Col Pramod Jaiswal,

80. Col Prakash Rao
81. Capt (IN) Raj Bir Mohindra,
82. Capt (IN) Virendra Singh Hooda,
83. Gp Capt Diljit Bobb ,
84. Gp Capt Vivek Bandopadhyay, SC, VM(G),
GOC – in + C CC
85. Lt Col Srinivas Patri,
86. Lt Col Dinesh Kumar ,
87. Lt Col Romesh Chugh,
88. Lt Col Kiyam Achouba Singh,
89. Lt Col Jagdeesh Desai ,
90. Lt Col Rakesh Bhandari ,
91. Lt Col Santosh Abhyankar, YSM
92. Lt Col Vijay Kharkar,
93. Lt Col Gurmukh Singh,
94. Lt Col Anand Balraj,
95. Lt Col Vikas Gosain, GOC – in – C CC
96. Lt Col Mateti Upender, COAS CC
97. Lt Col Anil Suri,
98. Lt Col Subeydar Singh,
99. Lt Col Hari Bisht,
100. Lt Col Jaiparkash Narain,
101. Lt Col Srinivas Patri,
102. Lt Col Mohan,
103. Lt Col Diwan Singh Khadka,
104. Lt Col Noel Ellis,
105. Lt Col Kuppaswamy R Belle,
106. Commander Kujad Jani,
107. Commander R Biliya,
108. Commander Sudhir Dua,
109. Surgeon Commander Abraham
Adangapuram , VSM
110. Wg Cdr Shashank Bendre,
111. Wg Cdr Prabhat Kumar Ayre,
112. Wg Cdr D N Sahae, VrC
113. Wg Cdr Basudev Mukherji,
114. Wg Cdr Rajesh Khosla,
115. Wg Cdr Kumaran Tampi Sudhir,
116. Wg Cdr Rakesh Sant,
117. Maj Khadka Gurung,
118. Maj Devasahayam MG,
119. Maj Priyadarshi Chowdhury, SC
120. Maj Rajnish Sharma,
121. Maj Suresh Vikramadithyan ,
122. Maj Majesh Patel,
123. Maj. Behram Dadaemery,
124. Maj Roopak Radhakrishnan,
125. Maj Maj NK Gadeock ,
126. Maj Sanjeev Bhagwani,
127. Lt Commander R W Kori,
128. Lt Commander Farokh Tarapore, VSM
129. Sqn Ldr Rana Chhina, MBE
130. Sqn Ldr Bidyut Chatterjee,
131. Sqn Ldr Vasant Ghanate ,
132. Capt Raveendranath S,
133. Capt T G A Raghavan,
134. Capt Surinder Pal Singh,
135. Capt Sanjay Gandhi,
136. Capt Dr R Balasubramanian ,
137. Lieutenant (IN) Dattajirao Nalawade,
138. Chief Petty Officer Vijay Singh Bais,
139. Junior Warrant Officer Sivasankaran
Pacheeri ,
140. Hav Virsingh Tewatia,
141. Petty Officer M Ali,
142. Able Seaman Cyrus Saiwalla ,
143. Corporal Chandu Venkateswar Rao,
144. Leading Seaman Ram Bachan Maurya,