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India and China are at loggerheads over a border dispute in the Himalayas

Chinese and Indian troops are on the alert for a possible armed conflict in the event their respective governments fail to achieve a peaceful resolution to their border dispute on the Doklam plateau in the Himalayas.

India's defence minister Arun Jaitley told parliament that the country's armed forces are "prepared to take on any eventuality" of the stand-off.

Sources close to the Chinese military, meanwhile, said that the People's Liberation Army is increasingly aware of the possibility of war but will aim to limit any conflict to the level of skirmishes such as those periodically occurring between India and Pakistan in Kashmir.

The same sources said that China's military believes any conflict will be controlled and not spill over into the three other disputed areas along the 2,000km border between the two nations.

However, Indian defence experts warned that once the first shot is fired, the conflict may escalate into full-scale war. That in turn could result in New Delhi blockading China's maritime lifeline in the Indian Ocean.

In July, India, the United States and Japan completed a 10-day Malabar 2017 naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal, while around the same time the US approved a \$365-million sale of military transport aircraft to India and a \$2-billion deal for surveillance drones.

As a result, the Indian navy now has eight Boeing P-8A Poseidon submarine hunters patrolling in the Indian Ocean.

Chinese and Indian troops fought a war in 1962 after a series of border incidents. The conflict ended in a stalemate despite China's large military advantage.

Elenoire Laudieri di Biase - *Sinologist at Ca' Foscari University, Venice, and at Melbourne University. Senior Analyst on China at NATO Defense College Foundation*