



## India to Use New Drones at Border with China

**OE Watch Commentary:** For the past several decades there have been tensions between India and China in their mutual Himalayan borderland. These tensions have recently escalated because of reports that China will extend its railway in Tibet through Nepal up to the Indian border. There are concerns China may edge up to, or even enter, India's territory. In this context, the accompanying excerpted Chinese-language article for the military news section of *sina.com* on 7 September has drawn attention to Indian efforts to purchase drones from Israel to monitor the border with China.

According to the article, India plans to purchase a Heron TP armed drone from Israel and will submit a formal tender in 2019. A version of this drone was reportedly used in some major Israeli operations in Gaza and on a Gaza-bound weapons shipment in Sudan in 2009. The article notes how the drone would provide India with the capability to carry out cross-border missile attacks in China and to monitor the Sino-Indian border more effectively than the smaller drones that India has previously used. In addition, the new drones would allow India to fly at altitudes of 5,500 meters above sea level, which is conducive for the high Himalayas.

Although the article does not mention what China's response will be to this drone acquisition, and does not hint that India will actually outfit these new drones with weapons, news of the acquisition shows that China is certainly paying close attention. Nevertheless, in other recent cases along the Sino-Indian border in which India has used drones to monitor the border, such as in Sikkim, China has lodged diplomatic protests. Presumably, any future incidents will also be handled diplomatically as well, unless this higher quality system represents too significant a change of the status quo for China. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“There have been rumors that India will purchase the ‘Heron’ TP armed drone from Israel, which can carry out cross-border missile attacks.”*

**Source:** “印度将购以色列无人机监控中印边境军事活动” (India will buy Israeli drones to monitor military activities on the Sino-Indian border), *mil.news.sina.com*, 7 September 2018. <http://mil.news.sina.com.cn/china/2018-09-07/doc-ihitesuz6689475.shtml>

*On September 7 Hong Kong media quoted the Russian satellite news agency reporting that India hopes to purchase a remote-controlled aircraft system that can work at altitudes above 5,500 meters above sea level. The report said the reason was that India wanted to explore carrying out military activities along its northern border with China. According to reports, there have been rumors that India will purchase the “Heron” TP armed drone from Israel, which can carry out cross-border missile attacks. It is reported that the Indian Army will submit a formal tender by April 2019, and manufacturers should be ready to deliver the system by 2020. The report said that the Indian Army has been using small drones for a long time, but these more advanced drones will strengthen India’s ability to monitor the Sino-Indian border.*



Source: Calips, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DRONE\\_HERON\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DRONE_HERON_01.jpg), (CC-by-3.0).