

Essay

Contours of Escalation in India-China Security Environment

Rakesh Sharma

It was apparent soon after Independence that India is geographically located in a far-from-benign strategic environment. Within the first 15 years, the nation was forced into wars against two adversaries – Pakistan and China. Since then, it has faced three more wars with Pakistan, and continuous tensions, incursions, etc., with both China and Pakistan. Persistent hostilities from the two allied adversaries have meant that even after seventy-five years since Independence, India has unsettled borders, a rapidly militarised territorial and maritime environment, and is incessantly deployed in countering infiltration and externally backed terrorism. Hence, for India, because of her geostrategic location, national security is defined by the adversarial attitude of its two principal neighbouring states and attempts at shaping a better environment have not borne fruit. Because of its unique strategic geography, it is mandatory that India has a strong and effective military force capable of defending territorial integrity and sovereignty against ever present threats from several sources.

India has set a goal of becoming a five trillion-US dollar economy in the next five years, and to play a key role as a regional balancer and stabilizer -- marking out its geostrategic perimeter. Undeniably, India will be a leading power in the foreseeable future. All this necessitates that she will have to quickly build up and consolidate its military strength and choose options wisely to play such a role. The creation of military strength in the prospective geo-strategic environment, hence, needs to be perforce visionary.

Lieutenant General (Retd.) Rakesh Sharma has had a career spanning forty years in the Indian Army. He has extensive operational experience in Jammu and Kashmir, North-East and on the Western Borders. He commanded the Fire and Fury Corps in Ladakh responsible for Kargil, Siachen Glacier and Eastern Ladakh – facing both Pakistan and China. He is currently a Distinguished Fellow with the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF).

National Security Vol. 5, No. 1, 2022
(January - March 2022) Page 32-45, ISSN 25-81-9658 (0)
©Vivekananda International Foundation

The greatest challenge of our times is to be able to make correct and timely assessments of the changes taking place and the nature and extent of challenges and opportunities they present.¹ Evidently by 2020 China had convinced itself of its geo-political achievements, its arrival as the second largest economy in dollar exchange terms, strong politico-economic spread of wings through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), global value chains dependent on China, reasonably modernised military, a significantly honed internal nationalism and its success -- without significant challenge -- in the South China Sea. Time then was ripe to open another front and further flex its geo-political muscle!

This paper explores the transiting strategic context in which Chinese intransigence, expansionism and revanchist policies on Indian Northern Frontier have occurred, and Indian responses thereof. China's argument about its exceptionalism is contentious, although its expansionism is historic, with Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia and more recently South China Sea as cases in point.

China Asserts its Global Ambitions

"Hide your strength, Bide Your Time" is Over, a "New Era" Commences!

China's foreign and security policies were long guided by a doctrine stated in 1990 by Deng Xiaoping, then paramount leader, whose essence was "*hide your strength and bide your time.*" In the 19th Communist Party Congress held in 2017, China appeared to have parted decisively with the three-decade logic of keeping a low profile when President Xi Jinping delivered his most important speech. In a three-and-a-half-hour address to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), he stressed that Beijing would no longer shy away from world leadership and would even aim to promote its economic model around the world, harking back to an earlier era in China's 20th century history.² With this President Xi sounded the death knell of the "hide and bide" philosophy.

A series of profound changes can be discerned in China since the 19th Party Congress held in October 2017, where the policy was changed to 'socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.' It was heralded as the beginning of a "New Era" by President Xi himself even as he took the title of "Core Leader." A two-term Presidency was struck-down to facilitate Xi getting an indefinite term; and realizing the "Chinese Dream" of "National Rejuvenation" by 2049 was envisaged. The Communist Party of

China (CPC) led by Xi has pushed the people of China and the party cadres on a strong nationalistic course.

The “New Era” exhorted adherence to and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and renewal of the Marxist-Leninist standpoint and methods. There is also a deep push on in China to draw a balance between economic development and social development, renewed emphasis on revitalisation of a socialist culture, newer concepts of development and common prosperity, the anti-corruption campaign and intensive efforts to hone nationalism. The CPC led by Xi has been engaged in purges of all opposition or dissent under umbrella of ‘corruption’ and is ruthlessly punishing perceived delinquents. Between 2012 to 2019, some 7 Generals, 19 Lt. Generals and 55 Major Generals were investigated and punished. In early 2021, the CPC had declared the start of a long-expected fresh purge of its ranks of corruption, which will involve, *“turning the knife-blade inward”* against those deemed corrupt or insufficiently loyal to the party and its leader, Xi Jinping. Disloyalty to the hierarchy and the CPC was always unpardonable; it has now been taken to a higher level.

Between 2012 to 2019, some 7 Generals, 19 Lt. Generals and 55 Major Generals were investigated and punished.

The heightened emphasis on socialism has led to Xi’s enunciation of a ‘new development concept’, ‘dual circulation economy’ and ‘common prosperity,’ at the CPC’s Financial and Economic Affairs Committee on 17th August 2021. These have a sub-text in the domestic economy and the attempt by Xi to bring about a more equitable distribution of the pie. This increased emphasis on socialism and Marxism is meant to secure the support of the domestic audience and create the ground for interventions to control the enormous growth and influence of its large private sector tech firms that now have a global reach. This schema will significantly affect China’s economy and may push back growth.

Meanwhile, China is steadily buying global influence. Decades of economic growth and government prioritization have enabled China to create a nexus and control of global maritime trade. China is also using its economic and technological power to establish regional and global leadership. On its march towards global influence, China has been attempting to establish regional hegemony. This implies making itself the dominant player along its periphery, along land frontiers and in the maritime front out

to what it calls ‘the first island chain’ and beyond, by physically occupying territories. China has been using a mixture of inducement, coercion, aggression and political manipulation to weaken its adversaries, including India. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has made no secret of the fact that it is building and willing to utilise its military power-projection capabilities. It should, however, be apparent to China that it will be hard to subdue its regional territorial and maritime periphery militarily, as it confronts powers that stand firm against expansionism. China hence will keep up a “mix and match” strategy that deploys the full range of these tools regionally and globally.

China has been using a mixture of inducement, coercion, aggression and political manipulation to weaken its adversaries, including India.

There has been a dramatic shift in Chinese foreign and security policies towards an aggressive course. Consequent to the Covid-19 pandemic, China remonstrated against Australia for questioning its handling of the pandemic, greatly enhanced its claims in the South China Sea by pushing in its maritime militia, increased incursions around the Japanese Senkaku Islands and sent warplanes across the median line in the Taiwan Strait. Most telling have been typical lawfare, the spate of new legislations -- the 2020 National Security Law for Hong Kong dissidents, the June 2021 Data Security Law, January 2021 Coast Guard Law that challenges the existing rules-based order, and the April 2021 revised Maritime Traffic Safety Law. In October 2021, China passed a new Border law in which Article 4 talks about “sovereignty and territorial integrity” of the PRC being “sacred and inviolable.”

Expansionist Policy towards India

Nothing that happens or is said in China is impromptu, extemporaneous or unpremeditated! The geopolitical ambitions of China transcend beyond the borders. India and China have had border discussions since 1981 -- Joint Working Group meetings from 1988 to 2005, 22 rounds of Special Representatives Talks thereafter, 23 Meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), and many summits and visits at the apex political level. Agreements to maintain peace along the border and resolve disputes and differences through negotiations and non-use of force were signed in 1993, 1996, 2005, 2012 and 2013. The two countries had also accepted Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and protocols as part of the agreements. There were sporadic incidents of scuffles and fisticuffs, and

the long-drawn stand-offs in 2013, 2014 and 2017, which were later resolved, with troops disengaging and moving to their respective bases. In sum, despite the Line of Actual Control (LAC) being un-demarcated and un-delineated, the continued discussions at multi-fora signified progress and the unlikelihood of any escalation to conflict. In large measure, the India-China border stood literally and metaphorically frozen!

However, out of the blue, in May 2020, with the pandemic raging, China attempted expansionism across the LAC in eastern Ladakh. The PLA with more than two mechanised/motorised divisions surreptitiously moved from its training areas to Aksai Chin, followed by multiple sub-sectoral aggressions in Eastern Ladakh--both, first of their kind events. Premeditation by PLA was obvious. Lulled by the ongoing discussions, the Indian Armed Forces and the polity were caught by surprise. The incursions in Eastern Ladakh that led to the serious incident at Galwan Valley on 15th June 2020 must be taken as permanence in China's belligerent attitude. The Galwan Valley incident was a tactical issue, but it was not a small incident, it had strategic and global ramifications. The incursions clearly indicate coercion and intimidation as an integral part of Chinese way of realising its geopolitical ambitions. These events establish beyond any controversy that the PLA deliberately and in a well-planned manner broke the systemic of understandings and behaviour based on varied Agreements, protocols and norms. At least, the 2020 conflict clarified to India that belligerent, revanchist and expansionist policies are ingrained in China, and the challenge must not be soft-pedalled!

The 2020 conflict clarified to India that belligerent, revanchist and expansionist policies are ingrained in China.

A major unintended consequence of the multi-rounds of talks at Chushul-Moldo has been the creation of patrolling moratoriums in disputed areas in Eastern Ladakh, which, *wily nily* creates a Belt of Actual Control in Aksai Chin. There have also been very significant changes in the strategic geography of Tibet and Xinjiang in the form of underground silos, blast pens in airfields, missile sites, the positioning of People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) aircraft, new road-rail structures, and the attempts to demographically change the border areas. They are all challenging the notions of peace that existed pre-April 2020. China's references to its claimed, forcibly occupied, and expansive notions of boundary as a national sovereignty issue are attempts towards increasing belligerence and challenging India's historical boundary claims.

Simultaneously, China has been constructing the so-called moderately well-off border defence villages for over three years, with the ostensible aim of poverty alleviation. In reality, they are intended to create a buffer and serve as surveillance posts along the border. A total of 628 model well-off border defence villages are under construction in 21 border counties along Tibet's frontiers, stretching from Ngari (Ali) district to Nyingchi (Linzhi), involving 62,160 households with a total rehabilitation of 240,000 people.

The obvious implication is that China is attempting to fixate the entire LAC by settling in population in newly constructed border villages, and in Eastern Ladakh's contentious Aksai Chin by the Belt of Actual Control created by stand-off buffer zones! Additional disputed areas in the Central Sector and North-East too have possibilities galore for PLA attempting to surreptitiously occupy discernible voids. This will mandate permanent physical and electronic domination, lest they become fait accompli post futuristic PLA belligerence and expansion. It can hence be inferred that the push along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is a deliberate design of the PLA/CPC. The recent events do not inspire confidence in the existing Agreements and Protocols, and the Indian armed forces have a deep trust deficit in the machinations of the PLA.

China is attempting to fixate the entire LAC by settling in population in newly constructed border villages, and in Eastern Ladakh's contentious Aksai Chin.

Envisioning Prospective Escalation with China

Sun Tzu had centuries ago prophesized that '*all warfare is based upon deception.*' China has consistently demonstrated a preference for ambiguity, risk manipulation and controlling the narrative to win without fighting.³ Henry Kissinger had opined that "*...whereas Western tradition preferred the decisive clash of force, emphasizing feat of heroism, the Chinese ideal stressed subtlety, indirection and patient accumulation of relative advantage.*"⁴ Chinese defence ministry spokesperson Senior Colonel Wu Qian on 25 November 2021 said: "*Indian officials speculate on the so-called Chinese military threat for no reason, which is a serious violation of the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two countries that China and India do not constitute a threat to each other, and incites geopolitical confrontation, is irresponsible and dangerous.*" While this statement may sound placatory, the tone

and tenor of many others by Chinese spokespersons and official media have taken tones of stridency and arrogance. There is a disputed nature of the boundary, and evidence of events of 2020-21 in Eastern Ladakh, the location of PLA formations in proximity to the LAC, the fast-track construction of military infrastructure, and the ongoing training and experimentation of units of PLA, speak for themselves as a pattern of threat.

Hence, it may be prudent to accept that currently the Chinese regime does not seek 'peace and tranquillity' or to follow the past Agreements and Protocols. India's formulations must therefore be pragmatic, in keeping with the ground realities. As is apparent, increased trade between China and India cannot be sustained given the serious situation obtaining on the borders. For India, territorial integrity is a prime responsibility, and without formal resolution, progress on other facets of relationship, like economy, will remain problematic. India is also a large country with the second largest population, the Himalayas in the North, a large maritime frontier and a capable, modernising military. Hence, threats or admonishments of miscalculation of Chinese comprehensive strength are counterproductive. It is, however, mandatory that India be prepared for the worst-case scenario. In this context, it is essential to examine what is contemplated by China as modern warfare.

China and Modern Warfare

It has been analysed that the PLA now characterizes and understands modern warfare as a confrontation between opposing operational systems rather than merely opposing armed forces. PLA's victory in modern warfare recognizes system destruction warfare as the method of modern warfighting.⁵ Future wars will be won by disrupting, paralysing, or destroying the operational capability of the adversary's operational systems. Systems confrontation will be waged not only in the traditional physical domains of land, sea, and air, but also in outer space, nonphysical cyberspace, electromagnetic spectrum, and even psychological domains. There are four target types that PLA planners seek when attempting to paralyze the enemy's operational system

The PLA now characterizes and understands modern warfare as a confrontation between opposing operational systems rather than merely opposing armed forces.

through either kinetic or non-kinetic attacks:

- First, the PLA calls for strikes that degrade or disrupt the flow of information within the adversary's operational system. Towards this end the PLA will attempt to paralyze information flow by targeting key data links and vital information network sites. By carrying out strikes against data links and vital information sites, the subsystems of an operational system can be rendered "information isolated" and therefore unable to function, or operate independently.
- Second, degradation or disruption of the operational system's essential factors, which include command and control (C2), reconnaissance intelligence, and firepower capabilities.
- Third, degradation or disruption of operational architecture of the adversary's operational system by kinetic and non-kinetic strikes. These include key points and physical nodes of the above-mentioned capabilities. Striking the operational architecture is a target-heavy approach that could require numerous successfully executed precision strikes against various components arrayed around a broad battlefield.
- Finally, disruption of the time sequence and/or tempo of the enemy's operational architecture. This is to degrade and ultimately undermine the operational system's own "reconnaissance control-attack-evaluation" process. The aim is to paralyze the functions of an enemy's operational system. The operational system comprises roughly five main systems: the command system, the firepower strike system, the information confrontation system, the reconnaissance intelligence system, and the support system.⁶

By the sheer breadth and depth of scientific prowess, and a modern, technological war the PLA aims to dictate political terms, and in this manner, redefine victory.

India's Strategising for Modern Warfare

Robert D Kaplan wrote of the "*flattening Himalayas*", the "*defeat of distance*" and that "*the high wall of the Himalayas no longer separates these two great civilizations.*"⁷ In reality, the super high altitude of the Himalayas is the most difficult terrain and with very tough conditions for the human body and machines alike. Such warfare by China

may attempt to avoid defensive strength and the offensive-defence doctrine of the Indian Army to avoid a sloggy match and suffer large casualties. Territorial aggression in mountains/ high altitude may only follow after significant damage has been wrought by system destruction. Though the PLA may attempt to soften the strong defensive lines across the LAC, in the terrain obtaining and in the normal prevalent weather conditions, its efficacy is questionable. As offense across the high mountains cannot be deemed as totally obviated, and the ground ingress routes are largely predictable due to terrain configuration, the third dimension or *coup de main* may be utilised to subdue the defences. However, the altitude, the weather and the machine capability may again preclude adequacy of lift.

That brings the focus to a proactive and far-sighted response by India, as the challenges to national security are indeed grave. A six-point formulation is proffered:

- Since the conflict-of-interest is centred on contested, unsettled borders, territory will remain an important contentious issue in future wars, though the larger basis may be related to geo-political rivalries or power struggle. The likelihood of conventional force-on-force warfare will exist. It is likely that PLA may utilize a substantially large quantum of force on the territorial frontier of the Tibetan plateau and Xinjiang. However, the high-altitude terrain will create severe restrictions on *ad-lib* movement, forced to be carried out in defiles or plateaus. Sustainance of force will depend on narrower mountainous axes, aerial drops or make-shift landing ground. With offensive operations in the Kargil War 1999 as a general indication, the adversary must bring to bear major force asymmetry to contemplate operations against battle-hardened and experienced Indian troops occupying well-constructed linear defences. In such areas obtaining on the borders, geospatial information of heights and lows, passes and valleys, rivers and water sources, is essential for basic visualization of operations to support decision making. The exploitation of natural and man-made features, and its analysis and interpretation, predict the effect of terrain on military operations.
- The operational level commanders will be concerned with employing military forces in a sector of operations to obtain an advantage over the enemy and thereby attain strategic goals through design of battle and conduct of campaigns. Gen. H R McMaster had once said, "*There are two ways to fight ... asymmetrically, or stupid.*"

In the conventional war that will be fought asymmetrically, the design would have to be tailored for the campaign, utilising the linear defences as pivots and employing composite Task Forces (TFs), or Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs), sized and composed exclusively for each avenue of ingress. The composition of the TFs will be tailored as per threat patterns of infantry, scouts, armour, mechanised infantry, artillery and engineers (the latter for provision/ denial of mobility). These specifically composed IBGs/ TFs, working in tandem, asymmetrically, would jockey to undertake a series of operations and accomplish the common objectives in the given time and space.

- India must plan to offset and defeat any force-asymmetry in the adversary's favour by degradation and admixture of asymmetric warfare, kinetic strike and defensive layout. Asymmetric warfare should encompass using linear defended lines only as tripwires, and saturate the battlespace with strong deniability, by focused and imaginative ruse and subterfuge. Asymmetric warfare in manifold realms would enlarge the battle space to logistical sustenance lines and the forward lines of ingress and chokepoints as one whole-- that will be the key to victory in territorial warfare. Apparently, imaginative asymmetric warfare across the battle space will deny the adversary any technological advantage and stalemate any territorial aggression. Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) are critical for putting the right chess pieces in place and executing the operational plan. For example, in the environment as available in Xinjiang and Tibet, and in correlation to the location of the combined arms formations of the PLA, it is feasible to implement an intelligence plan – based upon all strategic, operational and tactical inputs. Since the salience and preparations for modern conventional kinetic war cannot be put on the backburner, substantive offensive capabilities, duly acclimatised, trained and kitted, must be available for achieving 'across the hump' success and consolidation. Substantial enhancement of third dimension capability will provide requisite deterrence and reduce the salience of massed combat power.
- Warfare may also go well beyond force-on-force engagement. It would utilise potent long-range precision guided munitions, hypersonic weaponry, drone swarms, autonomous systems and stealth operational capabilities delivered by multi-modes-- ground, air or projectiles. The wars may also be wholly non-kinetic in nature--conducted in the domains of information warfare, space and cyber

space, and electronic spectrum that may cripple critical national and defensive infrastructure and forces. India will require hardening of its systems against premature destruction. The Indian Armed Forces need to create a robust, capable, and adaptable operational system of its own to fight a modern war. The Indian Army has to focus on acquiring modern kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities, to withstand the onslaught and have offensive capabilities for *quid pro quo* and more. The greatest strategic effect that cyber power and offensive usage of the electromagnetic spectrum can offer is its ability to deny, disrupt and manipulate the adversary's weapon systems and infrastructure, including communications. This modernisation will require India to embrace information-warfare technologies, recognising that it will involve the application of a combination of technologies like processing power, connectivity, machine learning and artificial intelligence, automation, autonomy and quantum computing, that will achieve the disruptive effect we need. India must develop a framework of strategic capabilities against non-kinetic technological threats, such as weaponized information, cyber and other subversive forms of aggression – against the adversaries.

The Indian Armed Forces need to create a robust, capable, and adaptable operational system of its own to fight a modern war.

- India will have to accept that a multi-domain campaign is the future of warfighting campaign. Hence a joint multi-domain specialisation would indicate the right preparation for future warfare. Given the diverse nature of the Indian Armed Forces, the requirement is of composite, integrated multi-domain task forces located regionally/sector wise under an overall Joint Multi Capability Command that will amalgamate the sunrise technologies. Indeed sufficient redundancies exist within the armed forces to reconfigure them without relying on unnecessary accretions.⁸
- China has created the world's largest modern Navy in its attempt to expand its blue-water naval capabilities to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This points towards Chinese intent to project power, protect its expanding maritime interests and create a permanent naval profile in the IOR. These activities are portent of a future

India will have to accept that a multi-domain campaign is the future of war fighting campaign.

maritime arms race within the IOR and beyond. India by all measures dominates the subcontinent, and has the biggest role in the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the IOR. India's central location in the IOR, and its proximity to the sea lanes emanating from the Persian Gulf, the Malacca Straits and the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden, makes it the natural regional naval power.

The Indian diaspora in the IOR nations also has its significant needs. India continues to be the dominant naval power, with enormous responsibilities due to its extensive maritime trade, the island territories, a vast coastline and geo-political ambitions. India has, through diplomacy, strengthened strategic links with Indian Ocean littoral states, forged closer ties with the US and its allies, and is building its military power to complement its strategic outlook. It is necessary that India continue with the build-up and modernisation of its maritime prowess, including amphibious, maritime air and naval joint warfare capabilities.⁹

Conclusion

The Communist Party of China has a critical run-up to the Party Congress in Oct/Nov 2022, in which President Xi Jinping will most certainly seek, and most likely get, a third term as General Secretary. China's run-up to the quinquennial event will also entail a shake-up in the top echelons of Chinese politics – such as the Politburo and the foreign policy establishment. To stay on for the unprecedented third term, President Xi Jinping has to ensure that the environment facilitates continuation. There can be multiple scenarios for China's political, social, economic, foreign, security and geo-economic policies in the coming one year as also during Xi's expected next term in 2022-2027. In his 1st July 2021 speech, President Xi had clearly threatened that *"no one should underestimate"* the will of the Chinese people to defend their national sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Xi's renewed emphasis on sovereignty is evident in China's actions in its periphery. CPC bases its concept of state sovereignty on selective and historically doctored territorial claims. The border issue is reaching an overarching level, essential for CPC's monopoly of control and exercise of power in the country!

In sum, India's external environment, with two adversaries that have refused to abandon extreme positions and attitudes, is becoming more virulent as if in symphony and synchronized. It is time for proactive measures to locate and exploit the adversaries' Achilles Heel(s)! The worst-case scenario of hostilities with the PLA could be grossly

different from what was previously conceptualised. A distilled vision and balance in strategic planning and preparations is imperative, both for peace time management and escalation, as and when it takes place.¹⁰

The Indian Armed Forces are one of the most significant custodians of national security. In crystallizing thoughts and plans on future wars, time may not be on India's side and it might already be the testing ground for military technologies, without even appreciating it. Technology has fundamentally transformed the character of war, and maybe its nature too, in a significant measure! Wars in the future may be conducted without extreme violence, aggression, destruction, and mortality, and yet cause enough suffering and disruptions to achieve political success. The Indian Armed Forces, in concert with other elements of national power, need to work in unison to eliminate the strategic and operational uncertainty, and step on the pedal.

References

1. Singh, Jasjit. "A Security Strategy for the 21st Century." In AVM Kapil Kak, Ed, *Comprehensive Security for an Emerging India*. New Delhi: Knowledge World Publishers, 2010.
2. Clover, Charles. "Xi Jinping Signals Departure from Low-profile Policy." October 20, 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/05cd86a6-b552-11e7-a398-73d59db9e399>.
3. Mastro, Oriana Skylar, and Arzan Tarapore. "Countering Chinese Coercion: The Case of Doklam." War on the Rocks. August 29, 2017. <https://warontherocks.com/2017/08/countering-chinese-coercion-the-case-of-doklam/>.
4. Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. London: Penguin Books, 2012. p.47.
5. Engstrom, Jeffrey. "Systems Confrontation and System Destruction Warfare: How China Seeks to Wage Modern Warfare." RAND Corporation. 2018. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1700/RR1708/RAND_RR1708.pdf.
6. Ibid.
7. Kaplan, Robert D. *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2012.
8. Sharma, Rakesh, Lt. Gen (Retd). "*Pushing the Limits of Endurance - High Altitude Warfare, in Force in Statecraft*", In Arjun Subramaniam and Dipendu Choudhury, Ed, New Delhi: Knowledge World Publishers, (forthcoming 2022). p104.
9. Sharma, Rakesh, Lt. Gen (Retd). "The Determinants of Indias National Military Strategy." The United Service Institution of India. April – June, 2021. <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/the-determinants-of-indias-national-military-strategy-2/>.

10. Sharma, Rakesh, Lt. Gen (Retd). "Eastern Ladakh – Fixing" No-Patrolling Buffer Areas "!" Vivekananda International Foundation. August 09, 2021. <https://www.vifindia.org/article/2021/august/09/eastern-ladakh-fixing-no-patrolling-buffer-areas>.