

Book Reviews

1965 A Western Sunrise: India's War with Pakistan*

Shiv Kunal Verma

Shiv Kunal Verma's latest offering after his '1962: The War That Wasn't' is '1965: A Western Sunrise'. The book, released in the USI in October 2021, is once again a masterpiece. There is no doubt that Kunal has the ability to reflect upon and painstakingly go over all the events and then give his interpretation and views. By far one of the most lucid and detailed accounts of the 1965 war, Kunal has raised the bar considerably. He has the wonderful ability to put together events from the strategic, operational, tactical, and personal perspectives, and thereby give a unique clarity to the entire picture.

What is remarkable is the breadth of this account, seamlessly moving from the Rann of Kutch where the first salvos were fired, to the icy heights of Kargil, on to the infiltration in J&K, the battle in Chhamb, and the battles in the plains of Punjab and deserts of Rajasthan. Each sector with its unique set of challenges, from the terrain to the weather, and the type of opposition, both in quantity and quality. He covers the Army and Air Force, the nuggets regarding the higher directions of war, the personalities involved, and the courage, commitment, and capabilities of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen; the book has it all.

Unfortunately, this review cannot cover all aspects of this extraordinary book but it will focus on a few major issues. The book opens with Flight Lieutenant Alfred Tyrone Cooke and Flying Officer (later Wing Commander) Subodh Chandra Mamgain's Hawker Hunters duel with Sabres who had returned for a second strike after a successful raid on Kalaikunda on 07 September 1965. Cooke literally forced one to hit the ground, but while engaging the other realised, in what was a huge blunder, that his aircraft and Mamgain's had been loaded with practice ball ammunition instead of high explosive (HE) shells as required for

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combat sorties during war time. This was why Cooke could see his bullets hitting the Sabre but not having the desired impact. This unfortunately repeats itself in some places again where the Indians, in spite of poorer equipment, managed to outmanoeuvre the adversary but failed to take advantage due to a number of other factors.

The duplicity of the British post-1962, particularly Lord Mountbatten and Sir Duncan Sandys (Churchill's son-in-law) who wanted to link help against the Chinese to resolving Kashmir, has once again been documented. Mountbatten had convinced himself that the only real workable solution was an independent and demilitarised Kashmir Valley. Nehru was being told by the British that any formula that was worked out would necessitate India giving a large share of concessions to Pakistan. However, Pakistan's handing over Shaksgam Valley to China in 1963 and Nehru's death in 1964 prevented an Agreement. The book exposes this aspect of Chinese collusivity, with the Chinese advising Bhutto regarding the infiltration in the valley. They advised targeting the villages instead of the towns as well as conveyed their readiness to retaliate in case India opened up a second front. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, both, had shared their wisdom with Pakistani leaders on how to deal with India, especially with regard to Kashmir.

The book brings out that Bhutto was directly in touch with Major General Akhtar Malik, GOC 12 Infantry Division, 'considered to be one of Pakistan's finest generals', who oversaw and planned the infiltration as well as the Chhamb offensive. It was surprising that he was replaced when on the cusp of success by Major General (later General) Yahya Khan, a favourite of Ayub. Most analysts felt that this was because he was an Ahmediyya, but Kunal feels that a spectacular victory would have led to Bhutto gaining more prominence.

The conflict started in Kutch, where the Pakistanis wanted to try out their 'New Concept of Defence'. Major General (later General) Tikka Khan led 8 Infantry Division, duly supported by Pattons who violated the border in February 1965. Kunal talks about how Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Sunderji, as the officiating Brigade Commander, wanted to go for an offensive and brings out the issues of the CRPF companies, though technically under the operational command of 31 Brigade Group, reporting

directly to the Home Ministry. He states that alarm bells started ringing in Pakistan when the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, with its complement of escort ships, Sea Hawks, and Alizes, appeared in the Gulf of Kutch on 26 March in what was supposedly a familiarisation exercise. But from the Pakistani perspective, it signalled a serious intent.

In 1947, the navy conducted three separate amphibious landings at Porbandar, Jafarabad, and Mangrol after the Nawab of Junagadh, instigated by his Prime Minister, Diwan Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, the father of Zulfikar Bhutto, had acceded his predominantly Hindu state to Pakistan. Bhutto was now the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and one of the key players on the Pakistan side. This would have underlined the feeling of apprehension. However, why India decided to take this dispute to international arbitration is not understood as Pakistan, buoyed by this success, launched Operation Gibraltar in the valley. Ayub's judgement did get impaired by the Rann of Kutch in one respect: his old prejudice that 'the Hindu has no stomach for a fight' turned into a belief. Ambassador Rasgotra quotes an American embassy officer who said, "This is a diversionary tactic, and a bigger attack is planned in the north".

We are then witnessed to the gallant action on the icy heights of Kargil in May 1965 and the capture of key features by 4 RAJPUT and 1 GUARDS only to give it away following a negotiated settlement in June. For the men, the returning of the features they had captured where their comrades had been killed was a huge betrayal. Little did the men realise then that Kargil was to be a precursor to Tashkent.

The book exposes the readers to the operations by 15 Corps under Lieutenant General KS Katoch, who played a critical role in the Kashmir Valley during the 1947–48 tribal invasion. 15 Corps had not only been able to stop the infiltrators but also achieved spectacular success in various operations, including the capture of Haji Pir by 1 PARA as part of 68 Infantry Brigade, where Brigadier Zoru Bakshi decided to go ahead with his plan in spite of his GOC's reservations. The exploits of Major Ranjit Singh Dayal in this action are wonderfully narrated, as also the exploits of 4 KUMAON under Lieutenant Colonel Salick at Trehgam, and the gallant action of 2 SIKH, under the outstanding Lieutenant

Colonel NN Khanna, who captured the impregnable Raja defences but lost their CO; the men who fought under him paid tribute in just four words — '*Raja liya, Raja diya!*' (We took the king but gave the king!).

1 Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General PO Dunn, was operating directly under Army Headquarters and was only subsequently placed under General Harbaksh, the Western Army Commander. The offensive punch was able to divert and destroy a major portion of Pakistan's armour 26 Infantry Division' under Major General (later Lieutenant General) ML Thapan, were methodical in achieving their aims and the actions of 52 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) RD Hira and 7 JAT under Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) RK Jasbir Singh have been wonderfully written.

11 Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Joginder Singh Dhillon, bore the brunt of Pakistan's offensive. Major General Niranjan Prasad, GOC 15 Infantry Division, had to be removed from command for the second time after his earlier failure in Arunachal Pradesh in 1962. Yet, the bravery and determination of 3 JAT, under Lieutenant Colonel Desmond Hayde who crossed the Ichhogil Canal not once but twice threatening Lahore speaks volumes about this battalion. 7 Infantry Division under Major General (later Lieutenant General) HK Sibal, at Ferozepur, advanced on the Burki axis where the exploits of a company of 19 MARATHA LI commanded by Major (later Lieutenant General) MA Zaki are very well recounted. 4 Infantry Division under Major General Gurbaksh Singh had suffered at the hands of the Chinese just three years earlier but were resolute in defence. 4 GRENADIERS under Lieutenant Colonel Farath Bhatti were instrumental in destroying a large number of Pattons for which CHM Abdul Hamid was awarded a PVC, India's highest gallantry award in war. The killing of the Commander of Pakistan's 1 Artillery Brigade by the same battalion brings out the confusion in the fog of war, in this case adversely affecting the Pakistanis.

In 1947, as per the 2:1 ratio adopted, India had twelve armoured regiments while Pakistan had six. Operation Ablaze suddenly hammered home the reality that India's fifteen cavalry regiments were up against Pakistan's eighteen. To make matters infinitely worse, it wasn't just the numerical imbalance — even qualitatively Pakistan had the upper hand. What is important is

how these regiments fought. You have the tale of the outstanding Major Bhaskar Roy of 20 LANCERS, deploying his AMX-13 tanks in a copybook manner and holding up two of Pakistan's oldest regiments, the 11 Prince Albert Victor's Own Cavalry and the 13 Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers, at Chhamb-Jaurian. 18 Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hari Singh, was literally knocking on the doors of Sialkot. Unfortunately, the 26 Infantry Division thrust was never exploited. 1 Armoured Division under General Sparrow, easily the bravest of the Divisional Commanders, involved in one of the greatest tank battle at Shakargarh, with both Poona Horse under Lieutenant Colonel AB Tarapore, who was subsequently awarded the PVC, and Hodsons Horse, under Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) MMS Bakshi, destroying a large number of Pakistani tanks as part of 1 Armoured Brigade being led by the brilliant Brigadier (later Lieutenant General) KK Singh. Lieutenant (later Major) Brijendra Singh of Scinde Horse ably supporting 3 JAT at Dograi, Central India Horse advancing to Barki, and 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade, under the outstanding leadership of Brigadier TK Theograj, stopping the Pakistani offensive at Asal Uttar with 3 Cavalry, under the unflappable Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Salim Caleb, and Deccan Horse, under Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Arun Vaidya, creating a graveyard of Pattons. The positioning of 3 Cavalry with their Centurions with 2 (Independent) Armoured Brigade was a masterstroke.

The air aspects have been covered with a great deal of clarity, the view from the sky is expansive. Our air warriors excelled themselves from the photo reconnaissance missions by Flying Officer Barbara in Kutch and Wing Commander Jag Mohan Nath in Punjab, to the bombing run of Peshawar by the Canberras, the missions flown over Pakistan, and in aerial combat. Unfortunately, we lost more aircraft on the ground which exposed a weakness in our air defence capability, but in aerial combat, our pilots, which included Squadron Leader (later Air Marshal) Johnny William Greene and Squadron Leader Trevor Joseph Keelor, always emerged on top in spite of limitations in their aircraft due to superiority of tactics and their bravery.

When you put the book down, you are well aware that after the initial setbacks, we had Pakistan on the ropes. Pakistan had suffered attrition and our troops were on the way to achieving

their strategic objectives, at both Sialkot and Lahore, Pakistan had depleted its ammunition reserves, while we had adequate. However, we failed to deliver the knockout punch. There were reasons for this which included incorrect information, a lack of coordination at all levels, and a failure of decision-making. For those who fought, the feeling was of being robbed of a decisive victory by an early ceasefire.

The COAS General JN Chaudhuri was senior to Air Marshal Arjan Singh, the CAS, by ten years which set them apart by a generation. As the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, he looked upon the Air Force and everyone in it, including the Air Chief, as rather young and inexperienced. The ability of the IAF to play a useful part in the event of a war was not taken seriously either. The manner and circumstances in which the IAF went into action in 1965 to prevent the breakthrough in the Chhamb Sector are illustrative of the delay in the decision on the employment of the air force until it was too late. Fortunately, with the introduction of the CDS in 2020, issues of higher defence have now been addressed.

Kunal also gives a very detailed insight into the other personalities involved; the towering presence of Lieutenant General Harbaksh Singh was everywhere. He was extremely battle-hardened, had an offensive spirit, and was quick to take decisions. However, what is wonderfully brought out is their inter-personal relations and how these had a bearing on the conduct of operations.

In perspective, India was still suffering from the disastrous war against the Chinese in 1962. Since 1962, the focus had been shifted to its northern adversary, and the western front had been neglected as far as reorganisation, modernisation and deployment of troops was concerned. After taking over as the COAS, General Chaudhuri had visited as many formations as he could, telling the men repeatedly “that there was a big black mark on their faces (because of the 1962 defeat) which water alone won’t wash out and there was only one thing that could wash it out — blood”. He did not know it then that under his leadership, within a couple of years that opportunity would present itself. Our intelligence was also lacking, as brought out that we were unaware of the new raisings carried out by Pakistan, including 11 Infantry Division and the second (6th) Armoured Division. Fortunately, much of what

Kunal has highlighted had not only been identified but was also rectified, which enabled India to achieve a spectacular victory in 1971.

Kunal is known for the depth of his research and the brilliance of his writing but, most importantly, he is brutally honest. In the history of warfare, many decisions are unorthodox. Some are bold decisions, some are timid; some work brilliantly, some result in complete disaster, but in almost all cases, there is a chain of thought that is discernible when examined in hindsight. This is a book that will definitely be treasured and valued by all those who are keen students of military history.

Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

March to Justice: Global Military Law Landmarks. *Editors: Navdeep Singh & Franklin D Rosenblatt, (BluOne India LLP, Occam, Noida, India, November 2021), Pages 352, Price - Rs 995/-, ISBN-13: 978-8194954712.*

The book “March to Justice: Global Military Law Landmarks” is a compilation of articles on landmark military legal cases and commentaries on the military legal system by several jurists, academics, and judges from all over the globe. The editors are Navdeep Singh, a Chandigarh-based lawyer who is a Major in the Territorial Army and Franklin D Rosenblatt, who is a former officer of the Judge Advocate General’s branch of the US Army, and now teaches at the Mississippi College School of Law in the US and is also a judge on the Military Court of Appeals of Mississippi. Both the editors have an established reputation in matters relating to military law.

The stated aim of the book was also to conduct a comparative analysis of the law in various nations for a better understanding of the military system of justice. Sometimes the circumstances and nature of crime or the application of rules lead to miscarriage of justice or less than satisfactory application of rules. Military law should obviously help in ensuring higher standards of discipline in the military than is expected from the common citizen. At the same time, like any other citizen, the women and men defending their respective nations deserve the best, and that includes protection of their rights which boosts their morale, improves discipline, and helps them serve better. Because of this, military law, like other laws also has to be dynamic, with considered changes brought in through landmark cases and judgements. The book covers such cases and issues.

The book compiles essays and commentaries on milestone judgments of the Constitutional Courts on military law. It should appeal to not just readers who are interested in the military or law but also to general readers and those interested in public policy, governance, and human rights.

Military justice and military law have always been underpinned by the requirement to have standards of discipline higher than in any other armed or unarmed profession. To that end, along with nationalism and pride in the unit, the deterrent effect of swift and strong punishment contributes to maintaining discipline, especially

in war or warlike situations where the natural instinct is to avoid hardship and danger.

The book has 25 essays and articles besides a Foreword, Overview and Introduction — by Deigo Garcia-Sayan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, and the two editors, respectively. All these are informative and set the stage for the main book. The authors of the main articles are from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Georgia, India, Israel, Netherlands, Nepal, Sri Lanka, USA, UK, and Ukraine, and the cases dealt with are from these countries as well as China, Pakistan, and Turkey. Though one wishes that the authors of the articles on China, Pakistan, and Turkey should have been from those countries as well. However, it is understood that it is difficult to co-opt legal experts of some countries. That said, the authors who write on those countries have done full justice to the subject.

The book has commentaries and analyses of landmark cases such as “Solorio” and “Frontiero” (US), “Engels” (Netherlands), “Genereux” (Canada), Babita Puniya, GOC vs. CBI (India), Elor Azaria (Israel) and many others. While there are essays that are related to landmark decisions on women in the military, there are also commentaries regarding decisions on the applicability of civil courts to military personnel and about conduct of/powers to the military in internal security operations. The advantage of the book is that the chapters can be read either sequentially or at random because they deal with different scenarios, crimes, and subjects. The references to online resources and sources enable the readers who want to know more, to research each chapter, as per their interest, on the internet.

The book will make thinking readers ponder upon many related and contentious issues. The fear of the military to have their personnel open to civilian court jurisdiction is related to the felt danger of the civilianisation of military law leading to a breakdown of discipline in the field during war in the face of the enemy. The express purpose of military law is to maintain discipline in war. To that extent, none of the cases in the book are related to an offence in war. It can be logically presumed that the civilian justice system will not wish to get involved in cases related to war.

Often, the military attempts to try civil offences under its own jurisdiction either to ensure speedy dispensation of punishment,

to avoid an offender using the many stages of appeal available in civil courts, to avoid negative publicity or to protect their own. It is here that military law gets the most stressed, and it is consequent to such cases that the greatest 'civilianisation' of military law in diverse militaries has taken place. A related issue that often comes up is the application of military justice in internal security duties/ counter insurgency. There are landmark cases regarding this aspect in the book in the analyses of the conduct of the military and the application of civil and military laws in India, Pakistan, Colombia, Ukraine, and Israel. This is the 'grey zone' of military law. While application of military law in war has greater clarity, its application in counter- insurgency or counter-terrorist operations is opaque.

The book is written in a non-technical manner to be understood by a layperson as well as experts, both military and civil. The book fills a global void with such a compilation and helps the lay reader understand how military justice works, what the grey areas that require improvement are and what has been the comparative trajectory in various nations in military law and justice.

Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Chinese Geopolitics in the 21st Century: A Post Pandemic Perspective. By Brig Anand Tewari (Retd), Ph.D. (Pentagon Press LLP, New Delhi 2022), Pages 327, Price – Rs 1295/-, ISBN 9789390095407.

The book is a product of two fundamental needs emerging from the reading of books on China in the market for the purpose of predicting any response to its geopolitical imperatives. One is to know China from inside through an evolutionary study; and two, knowing the metaphysical makeup of its people. This book fills that void and tries to give well-researched geopolitical imperatives for China. It predicts Chinese responses instead of just having a look at the problem that China appears to be to the world.

Reading the book, one would realise that Chinese geo-body (of China Proper—which excludes the Autonomous Regions) has developed and taken the shape it has today from its nucleus in the Yellow River basin. It is made up of a multi-geographical, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic fabric. Hence, the Han nationality is just a collective psyche rather than a pure ethnic reality or

nationality. The ruling monarchs like Yuan and Qing have also not been from China proper. This demolishes the first impression about impregnability of China as a uniform and monolithic civilisation.

The book brings out, after a detailed geospatial analysis, as to how Chinese peoples' power centre and political power centre are poles apart now, after China proper has grown to its present form and size. Given the fact that the Chinese rebellions or revolutions, whether republican or communist, grew in the areas far south of the Yellow River basin, it indicates to us the likelihood of future centres of any such revolution for reforms. However, Hong Kong is not a true indicator but an exception due to its different heritage.

The book analyses as to how historically new inclusions of the autonomous regions like Tibet and Xinjiang will remain a geopolitical issue due to their better identification with their foreign neighbours than the Chinese neighbours. Although China has created an autarky for itself, it faces more geopolitical and strategic issues within its huge geography. And, therefore, China's geopolitical imperatives emerge from within and move into foreign geo-bodies like India, the Central Asian Republics as well as Mongolia, in a continuum.

That China lacks an open sea is a major roadblock in becoming a world power. China's resources and consumption markets being majorly concentrated in the south-east, geopolitical risks are also higher in those areas in its natural disposition. Taiwan just creates a flashpoint to manifest that weakness. The book posits that the South China Sea will become a Chinese lake due to China's expansion which is already in force, resulting in containment of China beyond the South China Sea.

China's creation of asymmetrical and global Lebensraums by making of tributary states across the world away from China, through geo-economic means, will make China a world leader in the long term, besides utilizing their resources to feed the Chinese population. It is, in a way, China's encirclement of the world.

The book also posits that China's geopolitical risks are more towards the south-east than towards the west or south-west. The military deployment of China is a clear indicator of their threat perception.

Will China ever become democratic country? 'No' is the clear answer. This is because, one, the Chinese people have believed in a hierarchical society, and two, because they believe in authority and order. However, freedom besides economic freedom — which is already given — will graduate to religious and then political freedom within the party rather than beyond the party.

Lastly, what does the book say about India and China? India must leverage its imposing geostrategic location in the Indian Ocean against any adversity from China during limited wars. Besides, during peace time, increased Chinese investments in India and India's heavy investments in its neighbours will do the balancing act. Otherwise, western countries heavily investing in India will provide growth but on a confrontational pitch with China as a contender.

Lt Col Anil Bhat, VSM (Retd)

The General Called Tsunami: Memoir of a Sapper. *By Lt Gen BS Dhaliwal (Veteran), (The Browser, Chandigarh, July 2021), Pages 268, Price - Rs 750/-, ISBN-13: 978-8194954286.*

Often, when we pick up a book on military memoirs, we examine the experience of the author and their credentials. There is countless number of them, yet some stand apart for their own intrinsic reasons. This book is one such which, by its novel approach, sheer simplicity of narration, bereft of rhodomontade, highlighting lessons learnt by the author during his military career spanning forty years, is a significant contribution to military erudition. It describes his varied and wide-ranging leadership roles in different assignments and tenures that ultimately led to his becoming the Engineer-in-Chief, the pinnacle for any sapper.

The title of the book is intriguing. It is derived from a write-up on the author in the CME Weekly. He became Commandant of the venerated institution in October 2004, shortly before the tsunami struck the Indian Ocean in December that year. The analogy of his assertive efforts to improve the CME with the tsunami is apt and many would recall his ventures and contributions to that end.

In the book, the author recounts his foundational experiences as a leader and sapper, extracting perceptive lessons he learnt and the manner in which assigned tasks were accomplished. His

initial interaction with his first CO and the handling of an explosive blast in his office are early career lessons. In an eminently readable style, which military officers can easily relate to, he narrates how he deftly addressed posting issues in the MS Branch at Army HQ and, later, his adroit handling of events as CWE at Chandigarh. His experiences in Botswana highlight the need to solve problems at their root with logical and simple solutions. What stands out is how he sought opportunities to improve the establishments where he was posted and the changes that he could carry out be it as the CO of an Engineer Bridge Unit or as Commander, Diploma Wing at the CME. It speaks volumes about his positive intent, loyalty, and commitment to the organisation.

This spirit of bringing about positive changes stands out in every chapter. As Chief Engineer, Project Beacon, his taking personal charge of the task of clearing a major landslide on the Srinagar-Zojila highway is an inspiring example of leading from the front. The international rowing channel at CME, Pune, is the result of his vision and efforts. His perception of the National War Memorial in New Delhi is a reality today. Of particular interest are the tasks given by the Service Chiefs, especially the Air Chief, which gained respectability for the Corps of Engineers and the Military Engineering Services which he headed as the E-in-C. He also touches upon his handling of the conflict for status between the MES and the army officers.

Lt Gen Dhaliwal represents a rare breed of military professional who shaped his work environment and applied the lessons learnt, which are narrated with empathy and a distinctive flair, for management. He adapted his leadership skills to ensure that his intent was understood by those he commanded so that they could own the mission set forth. The lessons learnt, mentioned at the end of each chapter, show his sagacity and discerning nature, and, above all, his willingness to learn from them. Combining simplicity with thoughtfulness, he explicates how he was moulded by his experiences in this very engrossing and readable memoir.

Every military career has its own hurdles and roadblocks that need to be overcome. He describes them with a sprinkling of humour. The author is generous in acknowledging his seniors, peers, and subordinates in a large-hearted manner and with a

distinctive warmth, exemplifying the values needed to achieve results at any level of the organisation and to build a winning team.

It is a narrative written with great candour. Those who read it will learn, in some way or other, about leadership and management. There are always challenges in a military career which have to be converted into opportunities. More importantly, one should take all that is destined to happen in our lives positively. He narrates anecdotes lucidly and with genuine honesty, but the learning lies in the way these situations were handled by practical, simple, and workable 'out of the box' solutions. He also highlights the need for development of professional skills and remaining updated on all facets of engineering. Those who have served in the military know that leaders set positive examples for others to emulate. The reader will truly appreciate the key takeaways that the author adds at the end of each chapter.

This book is an engaging read, leaving the reader with a satisfying, introspective feeling. Written in simple and luculent sentences, it is recommended to be read at all levels in the Services and also in government administration and the corporate world. It is a great addition to any bookshelf.

Col Harjeet Singh (Retd)

Modern Non-Lethal Weapons: Concepts, Application, Legal and Moral Perspective. By Dr UC Jha & Kishore Kumar Khara (*Vij Books India, New Delhi, October 2021*), Pages 192, Price - Rs 995/-, ISBN-13: 978-9390917709.

For over two years after the deadly Galwan Valley clash, the Indian security forces uncovered a range of non-lethal weapons as a harsh rejoinder to the Chinese. This response was aimed as a thorough preparation by the Indian forces to tackle China's troops with the help of indigenous resources under the Make in India initiative. Among the more alluring military technologies today are non-lethal weapons responsible for entangling and incapacitating the Indian enemy with dazzling names such as 'Sapper Punch' and 'Trishul'. The contemporary make-up of such weaponry relies on three factors — weapon characteristics, the targeted audience, and the context in which it is applied.

Conflicts in the early 1990s popularised debates surrounding the core concept of causing maximum destruction whilst minimising the number of victims. Present-day military structures render less importance to the past principles of war and defence which are based upon causing maximum destruction on the enemy and instead focus on operations based on new military realities. Dr Jha and Kishore Kumar Khera have skilfully published just that — the arrival of modern non-lethal weapons (NLWs), its potential in demystifying current definitional ambiguities, technological advances with respect to weaponry, and, finally, the undeniable relevance of NLWs future in future warfare. Within the margins of “non-lethal” settings, the book consciously expands on the existing core concepts of NLWs. In seven concise chapters, the authors run through the tight philosophy of CALM (Concepts, Application, Legal and Moral) perspective, which, much like its name, is the essence of their argumentation. Given the scale and scope of the ever-growing lethal weapon industry, non-lethality experienced tragic stumppiness. While rockets, bombs and missiles have been dominating the mainstream war, NLWs have restrictively served as internal security and policing props. Thus, the research in this book is generally a positive outlook on incorporating more of NLWs in the military forefront and the pressing need to abandon their association with merely crowd control, people disabling etc. Currently, NLWs are not only viewed as a potential opportunity for application of comparatively benign force but as technologies for which there is an operational need. Undoubtedly, NLWs create opportunities for controlled actions in a crisis that strengthen deterrent force; however, militaries need to capitalise on the potential of NLWs to exist in between the use of lethal force and non-use of force. This is not to suggest, as the author rightly pointed out, that NLWs is a monolith; their role ranges from law enforcement, anti-terrorism and peace-operations that not only complement lethal forces but are capable of completely replacing them in a number of situations.

The first chapter is deliberately designed to reimagine the emerging field of NLWs, its birth and its current stature in the defence sphere. It provides the readers with a detailed overview of the different facets of NLWs and how their features have not been fully decoded by non-specialists. There are numerous uncharted definitions, classifications and terminology that will

contribute to this lack of clarity. In the second chapter, the writers have delved deep into the popular policy dilemmas and systematically presented their case for “non-lethal” while promulgating cautions in their current use. They begin from chemical irritants, acoustics, electroshock, kinetical-mechanical and optical weapons. NLWs are widely employed in UN peacekeeping missions and are extensively explored in the following two chapters. Hence, the notions of deterrence, discouragement and delaying/preventing hostile actions/threats wonderfully align with the UN ideals of conflict transformation, management and prevention. In general, the legal flat lines of NLWs has newfound relevance in chapters three and four, where commentary on enhanced cooperation and other legal instruments bring further clarity in terms of weapon capabilities.

The sixth chapter is especially interesting as it throws light on pertinent civil society debates and conundrums over the ‘morality’ of non-lethality. The conclusion to be drawn is that the possibility of unintended fatalities and abrasion exist regardless of the furtherance in security, technology and use of NLWs. Lastly, the concluding chapter lifts a veil on the uncertain future of NLWs with its impressive homogenisation, functionality on different physical principles and varied applications and designs in the security sector.

The authors of Modern Non-Lethal Weapons have made it easier to understand an important concept with intelligent conceptualisation. The book is didactic for unboxing fresh deterrence ideas for those who are moulded to view explosives and bullets as the backbone of military might for the foreseeable future.

Ms Samriddhi Roy

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