



BOOK REVIEW

CHINA – INDIA BORDER CONFLICT : RECENT PERSPECTIVE

Mohammad Wasim, Commandant (Retd), CRPF
Reviewed by Cdr Amod Kotwal



Mohd Wasim joined the Central Reserve Police Force as a Sub Inspector and rose through the ranks to retire as a Commandant of a CRPF Battalion. A Master of Arts, he has served in Assam and J&K and was awarded the Police Medal. His service in border areas has evidently rendered the topic of Indo-China border dispute close to his heart, though the strategic aspects appear beyond his professional background. Mohd Wasim, Commandant (Retd) has also published the books, 'Security Policy: National and International Policy' and 'Modernisation of Indian Army: Still A Far Cry', during the same year.

The book studies the Indo-China hostility stemming from the border dispute. It deals with various aspects such as the show of the Chinese military might, missile exports, collaboration with Pakistan and encirclement of India through military influence in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar, among other Asian countries. The book takes a comprehensive look into the political developments and diplomatic ties between the two Asian giants. The book provides remarkable insights from the Western and Chinese perspectives enabling formation of a balanced opinion. Using simple language, it boldly calls a spade a spade. Geopolitical realities are clearly elucidated in the book, and the wisdom of the present Government's 'Panchsheel' mindset is questioned.

The book commences with an interesting chronology of events leading to, during and post the 1962 conflict. The introduction whips up reader interest with several lesser known and taboo facts pertaining to poor political and army leadership. The author attributes the devastating 1962 conflict to Prime Minister Nehru's flawed decisions, brash diplomacy post 1961 annexation of Goa and the US military support to India in light of the 'Cuban Missile Crisis'. The undeclared war is portrayed as a 'defensive counter-attack' by China.

The author traces back the genesis of the border dispute to the creation of Afghanistan and Tibet by British as a buffer between Imperialist Russia and Hindustan, divergent views on the McMahon and McDonald Lines, Zhou Enlai shrugging off earlier treaties as British Imperialism and the Indian position that Sino-Indian border should lie along the highest ridges of the Himalayas. The book analyses the profound impact of the Dalai Lama and the Tawang Monastery on Sino-India relations. The 1950s Chinese proposal for swapping Aksai Chin with Arunachal Pradesh (referred to as South Tibet) to resolve the border dispute is now seen as untenable for both parties. The author calls for an independent unapologetic strategy to deal with the historical Tibetan claim over Tawang.

The book reviews the Chinese doctrine and Asian strategy and terms Maoist-led Nepalese Government as the new Chinese front. It also brings out India's blunders and transgressions, rarely portrayed by the traditionally nationalist press. Political, Military and Economic recommendations interspersed throughout the book advocate cooperation stemming from convergence of strategic interests between two responsible global powers.





The chapters are a discontinuous collage of articles compiled from various subject experts, strategy related journals, newspapers and online resources. Insertion of citations and maps, besides stringent proof reading could have improved the overall quality. The author has lowered literary guard at times to emphasise emotive view points. Though frequently unsubstantiated and repetitive, the book presents interesting facets for those researching this important subject.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Cdr Amod Kotwal is an alumnus of 51st Naval Academy Course and 67th DSSC. A specialist in Communications and EW, he has been SCO on board IN Ships Gomati and Tir, an instructor at Signal School, Executive Officer of INS Prabal and has commanded INS Matanga. The Officer is presently Executive Officer, INS Kattabomman.



“ I think we should wake up the Captain!”

By Sub Lt S S Rao

