

## Book Review

YUDH MORCHO SE

Review By  
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Since 1947 the defence sector has remained quite closed to public reporting due to many prevailing myths. Very few journalists have tried to cover the area due to this disadvantage. Reporting in the defence sector has always been an ambiguous issue because of the seriousness of the matter. Sanjay Singh remains one of the earliest defence journalists who have broken this tradition. Sanjay Singh has spent over three decades in defence journalism and visited many places which are relevant for the empirical knowledge of the matter. Many of such visits could have been detrimental due to its proximity with the adversary position. Despite these inherent dangers, Sanjay Singh dared to visit such important places just to gather empirical input of the matter to fulfil his quest of knowledge and all such gathered first-hand information have been transformed into a credible and authentic work.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited all heads of the SAARC states during his first oath taking ceremony as the Prime Minister of India in May 2014. Pakistan's then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was also invited. Given the turbulent trajectory of Indo-Pak relations, it was historic given the fact that Narendra Modi was known for his zero tolerance against terror and he rose in politics while asserting the fact that Pakistan is the nursery of the global terrorism. Prime Minister Modi-led BJP has also been known as hawk against Pakistan.

Coincidentally in February 1999, PM, A.B. Vajpayee had visited Lahore and inked an agreement with PM Nawaz Sharif, known as *Lahore*

*Declaration*, which almost retreated the commitment from both sides to cooperate and prosper together. However, it was responded with the Kargil incursion which later turned in a mini war consumed over 1000 soldiers culminating into the withdrawal of terrorist and army by Pakistan after an agreement of July 1999 declared at Washington and guaranteed by US President, Bill Clinton.

This example did not deter Modi to invite Nawaz Sharif in his oath taking ceremony in May 2014. Modi also airdropped at Lahore in December 2015 to participate in the marriage ceremony of the granddaughter of Sharif. But it was also responded with the Kargil like model and air base at Pathankot was targeted in January 2016 by the terrorists again. Incidents of incursions have also increased in the following months.

Sino-Indian relations have been turbulent since decades. But right from the eruption of the Corona pandemic in early 2020 it has been further increased. China wishes to dominate Asia as unipolar power and perceives India as its biggest hurdle in its way to realise the dream. It is therefore attempting to teach India a lesson. Through Galwan (June 2020) India taught military lessons to China. It also taught China to realise that its army is not war hardened army like the Indian army. Therefore, it must be cautious in future Galwan type skirmishes particularly with India. The fact is despite these efforts turbulence still prevails even after over 15 rounds of dialogue to ease this prevailing situation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Now LAC has emerged as an important military point and this point has also duly been covered by the author.

According to available sources, over 350 JeM terrorists were killed during this air strike. It was a maiden attack by the Indian air force deep into Pakistan and also an open challenge to it. Since the Chagai blast (1999) Pakistan was univocal that nuclear weapons are deterrent against any attack on Pakistan. Balakot strike dismantled this hollow claim. This books also has debated this point and advocated that Indian policy should be proactive in the defence sector.

Sanjay Singh recalls that just after November 2008 terror attack in Mumbai, journalists were called at Vayu Bhawan just 400 meters away from parliament building at New Delhi and it was asserted that India would take adequate revenge. But nothing happened and after meeting of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with his Pakistani counterpart, Yousuf Raza Gilani in early 2009 at Sharam Al Sheikh (Egypt) during

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a NAM summit, the issue was put into the rest even before the dust of the attack was not adequately settled.

Sanjay Singh opines that this attack also encouraged the armed forces because on earlier occasions they were stopped from taking any revenge. Balakot therefore will be remembered as unique into the annals of Indian strategic history. The author has done adequate justice with the cause. The book is a must read for all, and since it is drafted in Hindi it enables a large section of common readers to know about the delicacies of the defence sector.

The arrival of the Modi government in May 2014 has further propelled export in the defence sector which was considered taboo earlier. In the financial year of 2021-22, India has exported defence goods worth of Rs. 13,000 crore and this is a Himalayan jump. This point has also been highlighted by Sanjay Singh. According to him, India has immense opportunities to accelerate defence exports at the tune of \$ 15 billion by 2030. He argues that beside providing employment to our youth, it will strengthen our ties with friendly countries particularly in Asia which is all set to be the theatre of global politics in coming decades. He also suggests that through that India could easily contain China. The book also drives us towards the history of our strategic planning and action.

*Yudh Ka Morcha Se* is a must read book for all concerned including students, journalists, strategic community and policy formulators. It has 14 chapters and it debates gamut of defence domains and provides first hand information's regarding India's defence preparedness. In fact, it is perhaps a maiden attempt to systematically put strategic discourse into the public domain in largest Indian language, Hindi.

Sanjay Singh covers strategic issues for last many decades and is known for his professional excellence in the domain of strategic journalism. I wish that this book will be of great use for all concerned.

**# Dr. Sudhir Singh** teaches Political Science at Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi and has contributed enormously into strategic issues since his last two decades of his academic carrier.