

INDIA-CHINA WAR-1962- AN EVALUATION

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Abstract

India never suspected that China would ever launch an attack, but it did. India was attacked on October 20, 1962 in what famously came to be known as Sino-India war of 1962. The belief of not ever being attacked by China did not let the Indian army prepare and the result was the standoff between 10,000-20,000 Indian troops and 80,000 Chinese troops. The war continued for about a month and ended on November 21, after China declared a ceasefire.

- On October 20, 1962, China's People's Liberation Army invaded India in Ladakh, and across the McMahon Line in the then North-East Frontier Agency
- Till the start of the war, the Indian side was confident that war would not be started and made little preparations. Thinking this, India deployed only two divisions of troops in the region of the conflict, while the Chinese troops had three regiments positioned
- The Chinese also cut Indian telephone lines, preventing the defenders from making contact with their headquarters
- On the first day, the Chinese infantry also launched an attack from the rear. The continued losses forced the Indian troops to escape to Bhutan
- On October 22, the Chinese lit a bush which caused a lot of confusion among the Indians. Some 400 Chinese troops attacked the Indian position. The initial Chinese assault was stopped by accurate Indian mortar fire
- When the Indian army discovered that a Chinese force gathered in a pass, it opened fire with mortars and machine guns and killed about 200 Chinese soldiers
- On October 26, a patrol from the 4th Sikhs was encircled, and after they were unable to break the encirclement, an Indian unit sneaked in and attacked the Chinese army and freed the Sikhs
- According to China's official military history, the war achieved China's policy objectives of securing borders in its western sector.

Keywords: India, China, War, liberation, ceasefire, guns, history, soldiers, troops, army

Introduction

The Sino-Indian War also known as the Sino-Indian Border Conflict was a war between China and India that happened in 1962. There were a number of reasons why China attacked India. In 1959, Indian Prime Minister had met Chinese Prime Minister and said Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai. Yet China decided to betray our trust and made a surprise attack. When we got independence, our leaders declared a foreign policy that said India and China are two equal and great powers of Asia. China did not agree and wanted to be the only power. Therefore, it first captured Tibet and made it part of China in 1950. In 1959 because of atrocities on the Tibetan people and Dalai

Lama (religious head of Tibetan people) fled Tibet, [1,2] India gave refuge to Dalai Lama and his followers in India. From military point of view, the border between India and China in Arunachal Pradesh, was drawn by a British shown by Sir Henry McMahon line in 1914. It was accepted by Tibet.



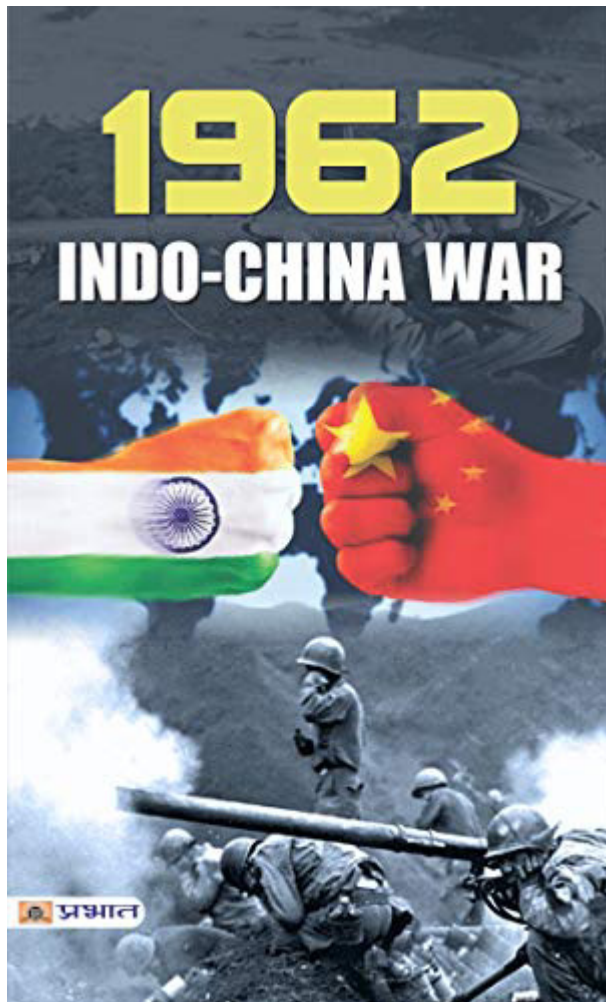
But China did not agree and said Tibet was not an independent country and could not make border agreements. Similarly in Ladakh region, the border between India and China was drawn by a British named Johnson in 1865. This was also not accepted by China. Under Chairman Mao, China wanted to take settle the border dispute by force in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore this problem of the border became a reason to have a war. The status of Tibet has been contested by china for long historically, India has border with Tibet. But after the Chinese annexed Tibet forcibly this border became the Sino-Indian border. Chinese maps showed 50,000 sq miles of Indian Territory in Aksai Chin as part of China. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru objected and mentioned it to Chou en Lai the Prime Minister of China during his official visit. China promised to resolve it but did not do so.[3,4]

The construction of roads by China passing through Aksai Chin since 1956 was considered by India as Chinese aggression over India territory. Additional check posts were established in Aksai Chin by the Indian Army in response to Chinese presence and the road built by the Chinese in Aksai Chin. In July 1958 China violated Ladakh territory near Khurnak Fort. Similar events took place in summer of 1959 in Migyitui and Pangyong lake area in Ladakh. 23rd January 1959, China officially disputed the boundaries in Aksai Chin and called then as it a wrong marking. 1959 Khampa rebellion in Tibet and Dalai Lama fled to India. Dalai Lama was welcomed in India and the chinese settled boundary dispute have always felt threatened by it. Chinese government Myanmar with based on McMahon line of those countries but has not recognised. This with India. This meant violation of the agreement of 1954 and laying claim to 50,000 sq miles. 1961 India's foreign policy followed the concept of 'Forward Policy' and deployed troops accordingly.[5,6]

Review of literature

On 20th October 1962, the first group of the Chinese People's Liberation Army launched a well-planned assault across the Thagla Ridge, in India's province of Assam. Arunachal Pradesh was

formed much later and therefore this area was considered as part of Assam. The war of 1962 happened in two regions, one was in Ladakh in the area of Aksai Chin and the second in Arunachal Pradesh. These can be called two sectors of operations. In military words, the word 'Sectors' are also called 'Theatres' of operations. India was facing a three front attack. The three fronts were Aksai Chin in Ladakh, Thag La in Assam (now Arunachal Pradesh) and at Walong on the China-Burma (Myanmar) - India border.



India faced a critical shortage of troops, ammunition and supplies. The winter clothing for High altitude areas was critically short of the requirement. Above all there were no roads to move troops. The Chinese came in massive strength. They started building roads to support the attack. In the Western sector the attack came at Daulat Beg Oldi, Chushul and Demchok.[7,8]

The Chinese captured areas which they said belonged to them. 13 Kumaon Rezang La is a mountain pass on the south-eastern approach to Chushul Valley in Ladakh, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India. It is approx. 3,000 meters long and 2,000 meters wide, with an average height of 16,000 feet. La means a mountain pass in Tibetan language. The Chinese attacked Rezang La at 5am on 18 November 1962. A Company of 13 KUMAON led by Major Shaitan

Singh defended the post with 123 men. The Chinese attacked with hundreds of soldiers, but our jawans opened accurate fire and killed many of them. [9,10] A second attack was launched at 5.40 am by 350 soldiers. They were also beaten back and many died. Repeated attacks from the rear of the defences left many dead and wounded on both sides. The Kumaon fought so well that 114 men died out of the 123 in that post. Major Shaitan Singh was awarded the highest gallantry award of Param Vir Chakra (Posthumously). A memorial has been built in Chushul in honour of the brave soldiers.[11,12]

Discussion and Results

In Assam, the Chinese forces attacked Thag La on 20 October and Walong on 21 October 1962. With their large number of troops and heavy artillery firing, they could capture Thag La and portions of Walong. Indian army was ill equipped and forced shortage of troops. The Chinese made an offer to negotiate a ceasefire on 24th October, the fourth day of fighting itself, if both sides withdrew equal distances from the current line-of-control. India refused. By the end of the first week of November, China had completely routed the India. [13,14]



The PLA controlled large part of Arunachal Pradesh. India requested emergency military aid from the United States. The United States, Great Britain and Canada took seriously Nehru's fear that China was attempting to cut off Indian north east region, and developed a joint plan that began to provide emergency military supplies to India on 3rd November. By this time, the PLA controlled a portion of India equal in area to Great Britain. However, in the north-east area of Walong, the situation proved to be quite different, Indian forces counter attacked on 13th November at Walong, but a concerted Chinese attack displaced them from this hard-won position, and the nearby garrison had to retreat down the Lohit valley. By 18th November, the Chinese had penetrated close to the outskirts of Tezpur, which was a major frontier town. The Chinese stopped their advance at that point and declared ceasefire. The two armies as now deployed on the line of actual control. 1962 Indo-China war is considered as a defeat for the

Indian Armed Forces. However, there were praise worthy instances of bravery shown by our soldiers.[15,16]

Implications

Numerical and tactical superiority of the Chinese Armed forces over the Indian Armed Forces. Chinese came in thousands and attacked. They had better equipments and weapons. No air support for the Indian Army fighting the Chinese troops. Poor clothing and vintage personal weapons for the Indian troops fighting in high altitudes.



In 1964 China tested its first nuclear weapon. India was also in the same pursuit, albeit quietly, since 1948. India announced its intent to go nuclear in 1964, only after the Lop Nor test by China. China probably thought that if India goes nuclear, they would not be able to attack India, so time was running out for them. Their objective to put chilling fear in the spine of all Indians had been achieved. But as Yogi Berra, the famous Yankees baseball player once said, “It ain’t over till it’s over.”[17,18]

Conclusions

The essence of the Indian response was an uneasy combination of realism and accommodation of Chinese interests.



And in the absence of military modernisation constrained by economic and institutional resources, diplomacy and soft external balancing via an attempt to leverage the superpower rivalry assumed the major burden of advancing India's diplomatic position and preventing conflict. Little effort was expended on internal balancing until after 1962. Further, the spillover of the Cold War into South Asia, largely via an American decision in the early 1950s to buttress Pakistan as a regional client, reduced India's options of external balancing. It made an alignment with the West unappealing to the nationalist consensus among the Indian elites that had produced the philosophy of non-alignment.[19]

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