In context to the growing security concerns in India emerging from both within and without, the ‘Military Strategy for India in the 21st-Century’, edited by Lt. General A K Singh and Lt. General B S Nagal, is an irrefutably significant contribution to the study of modern military theory that deals with strategy. The two other levels in military theory are operational and tactical. With intent to disseminate knowledge and experience on Indian military strategy, the authors have diligently collated and documented information and trends that define and shape a nation’s military strategy.

Considering, the paucity and vacuum of existing literature on contemporary Indian military strategy, one can be rest assured that this book fills much of that void, shedding adequate insight on the subject.

The book drifts into different chapters outlining and accentuating various aspects of national security strategy, military strategy, maritime strategy, space and cyber strategy. It addresses and elucidates various prominent security challenges and predicaments prevailing within the national security and military framework. The introductory chapter is written by Lt. General A.K Singh who clearly illustrates how the book has been planned and constituted, while addressing the queries related to the Indian military processes and mechanisms.

The opening chapter articulates India’s grand strategy (this might set the strategic analysts in motion) and the processes involved in the national security strategy. The second chapter of the book outlines the DNA of India’s security strategy and lists out a number of fundamental issues, which exist and emerge in the offices for securing its territory, people and assets into the larger global realm. Furthermore, it displays the blueprint and course of action intended on the formulation and planning of military capability, building of surveillance capacity, intelligence networks, effective command and control
system and further develops upon the edifice of territory, military, intelligence, strategy, strategic partnership and military diplomacy. The next chapter neatly illustrates the changing nature of conflict in context to the 21st century and documents the diverse capabilities in the field of defense through the lens of hybrid warfare. Given the fact that the nature of fighting capability and machinery has evolved over time to become more complex, the book skims through the nature of hybrid warfare as it falls short of argument to demonstrate the future of hybrid warfare.

While there has been reference to the Iran-Iraq war as well as long-standing wars that have been fought in the past, but the current trend of warfare has been circumscribed and confined to limited war, subsequently limiting and abating the overall effect of collateral damage too. The whole edifice of limited warfare implodes and disintegrates, whenever there is a discussion and debate on nuclear warfare and its related aspects, due to the intrinsic cataclysmic nature of nuclear conflict. For instance, the critical issues which have unfolded in West Asia in recent times, particularly in the case of Syria, wherein the Syrian Armed Forces employed illegal non-conventional weapons such as biological and chemical in the civil war, is a significant topic of debate that has not been covered in the book. Such prohibited use of illegal Weapons of Mass Destruction causes limited warfare to be extraneous. Similar events have unfolded in the past in the Vietnam War and in other theatres of conflict, which naturally raises key concerns on the value, and security of human life. A discussion on this human aspect of war would have been insightful for the reader.

The fourth chapter effortlessly encapsulates the fundamentals of military strategy, operational art and tactics and also serves as an informative reading for those who want to learn and understand military strategy. The non-traditional security threats have been adequately addressed in the book; however, the concerning chapter seems slightly vague in terms of addressing and overcoming the threats in a more meaningful and distinct manner. Moving forward, in the book to the chapters that deal with different aspects of maritime strategy, including space and cyber strategy, it is notably a good read as it illustrates the objectives of such a strategy. One of the intriguing features of the book is the chapter discussing on the role of the Special Forces in modern warfare. This chapter provides adequate exposure on the different aspects of the use of the Special Forces as a tool of India’s foreign policy, in order to shape the geopolitical entourage in India’s favor. Without divulging much on the operational and tactical aspects, it has effectively articulated the coordination mechanisms and the cooperative protocol, which has been adequately addressed in the respective chapter.
The chapter dealing with *Out of Theatre Operations* could have been better developed and further expanded, had the author proposed a case study and concluded the chapter by elucidating and addressing India’s initiatives with regard to rescue operations of its citizens during the Libyan and other Gulf crises. The chapter on Higher Defence Management highlights key issues in the defence management establishment and points out to the strenuous relation and interplay between the political and the defence establishments, since independence. It also narrates the way the higher echelons of political power in the country have dictated and restrained the optimal use of the defence forces.

The chapter on *Civil-Military Dynamic* is essential and critical to comprehend the civil military aspects of military strategy, for managing civilian assets and deploying them in times of necessity and emergency. The following chapter on Resource Management is extremely crucial for comprehending effective capital acquisition, planned over a length of time, with appropriate fund allocation while, concurrently focusing on engineering smart soldiers to counter the constantly evolving hostile threats and enemies.

The penultimate chapter discusses Defence Cooperation, which is the backbone of the book. It prescribes the urgent need for building a synergy between foreign policy and defence diplomacy in the larger context of the country’s national interests. At times, diplomacy has achieved to superimpose itself into the future by planning and building defence networks across the region.

The last chapter drafts the shortcomings with regard to the convergence between the political elite and the military leadership rendering a new perspective and understanding about the need for synchronization and futuristic vision for catering to the requirements of the military leadership. Coming to the concluding chapter of the book one would say it was too brief and as a reader one would completely sympathize with the author, given the fact that there were multiple perspectives that required collation to synthesize and constitute an understanding about the challenges and the future perspective on a nation’s military strategy.

Overall, one would truly enjoy reading the book as the work was compendious and insightful. It is an easy read which enables the reader to develop a fundamental understanding of military strategy. However, the editors could have included more aspects related to psychological operations, the role of social media and intelligence warfare.
Having said that, it would be certainly unfair to expect all the dimensions of military strategy to be included in one single volume of work, especially considering the fact that it is the first of its kind in Indian military literature. Nevertheless, it is indeed a great effort by the editors to publish a book of such quality on addressing key issues of national security strategy and military strategy, while ensuring to contribute significantly to the lack of existing literature in this field of study.