Twitter Thread by Ravindra Vasisht



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While some veterans have fallen in my esteem based on their responses to the untimely demise of #BipinRawat the #ChiefofDefenceStaff I share some thoughts from a strategic viewpoint on his tenure. Recall that at one point #SandeepDixit the MP from Cong called him a street side

goonda when he was army chief. He attracted unhealthy attention during his tenure as #ChiefofDefenceStaff esp from veterans & even resistance from fellow colleagues as reported. His competence itself was questioned & I have had logical arguments on this with folks here. Looking

back I realised that he was a man in a unique point in Indian military & political history & barring for a politician or a doormat nobody could have become popular. His was a thankless responsibility & from a strategic viewpoint he had just 2 options. Either to win the popularity

contest or be a maverick & unpopular. He chose the latter & correctly so. Only a true leader can make this decision. Let's look at why his tenure was unique. 1) A non Cong govt was in power for the 1st time in Indian history with a foreign policy that was similar but yet very

different from the past. There was a new found self confidence, assertiveness, breaking convention kind of approach across all nations & that needed any army chief to recalibrate the defence strategy 2) There was a clear open aggression & risk taking response to misadventures of

#Pakistan which meant a potential risk of both war & even a nuclear flashpoint. This needed huge huge recalibration from a defense view point 3) A decades long plan to create the position of #ChiefofDefenceStaff was implemented which meant that the power, position, privileges of

the 3 service chiefs would get affected, apart from the civilian admin & it was upto him to navigate these unknown waters 4) The more than once open #Chinese aggression at the border meant a real & present danger of a 2 pronged war again needing recalibration of attitudes 5) The

plan to create theatre commands & move the country into a more modern integrated security environ meant that too many toes would need to be stepped on. There was no time to do this slowly. Any org taking up such a change needs to ram it through first & then reposition with time

6) The make in India plans found new aggression & intent & unlike the previous India when SMEs were involved in bits & pieces the focus changed to big ticket which again meant humongous recalibration of attitudes from the armed forces 7) Threats of cyberwar, drones, electronics

meant that a war technically could become like a video game causing grievous harm to a nation economically & needed geeks & youngsters to be co-opted into solution development again needing a change in attitudes & approach 8) The continued belligerence of China, potshots by admin

opposition & activists to prevent border area development an area neglected for 70 yrs again meant navigating unknown waters 9) With limited funds the forces had to jointly plan acquisitions rather than each chasing their own dreams of grandeur in infra, pensions or land banks

had to be judicially leveraged/managed so as to benefit the forces without hurting - an impossible task in life - & every decision taken would be logically wrong in someone's eyes 10) With #COVID19 the risk of large number of men in uniform being infected, their vaccination only

compounded the challenges he would have been involved in as #ChiefofDefenceStaff . These are just what a layman can see & understand. Am sure internally he would have a few dozen more challenges that we are not privy to. While veterans & other experts can rightfully claim that

they have faced challenges too in their careers, the fact is that were maintaining status quo or bringing in incremental change situation by situation. Nobody in Indian history has had to navigate so many changes that cut across foreign policy, military strategy & preparedness,

a war without an actual war, a pandemic, tri forces integration & change as enumerated above. So his being a bull in a crowded shop wasn't a non option. History will judge him far better & his navigation & leadership during these times needs to be better understood & appreciated.

Talk is easy post retirement or from the comfort of arm chairs. Even the taking over of a small biz unit creates immense stress & problems becoz humans resist change. Anybody trying to bring change in human attitudes will lose the popularity contest unless they were a politician

Every decision would be criticised & can even be mistakes needing course correction not vilification.
So pl readers, do judge #Bipin_Rawat #GeneralBipinRawat #ChiefofDefenceStaff keeping all this in mind & so I say #TussiGreatHo #RIPGenRawat @adgpi @narendramodi @rajnathsingh