



## AAC Publications

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### **Solo on Lupghar Sar West**

A New Route Up a 7,157-meter Peak in the Hispar Muztagh

**On July 7 I reached the summit of Lupghar Sar West (7,157m) via the previously untouched west face.** (This peak was first climbed in 1979 via the southwest ridge.) Completely on my own, and after making some good acclimatization loops around base camp, I climbed from base camp for seven and a half hours to a good bivouac spot at 6,200m. Next morning I climbed a line on the left side of the west face to reach the steep northwest ridge. I followed this past some very loose rock and reached the summit at 11:30 a.m. (Just below the summit cornice, I found an ancient piece of rope, presumably left by a climber in 1979.) The descent proved both complicated and tiring, but nevertheless I made it safely down to base camp at 8 p.m. the same day.

It hadn't been easy to find the right approach to the base of the mountain. The upper Baltbar Glacier is pretty wild, and falling into a crevasse is the last thing you want to do on your own. I used my acclimatization forays to learn more about the approach, and luckily found some nice climbing as well, which was good for my motivation while adapting to the thinner air. I felt stronger than on previous expeditions, which was pretty cool.

I had planned to make two bivouacs on the ascent but decided to push to the top on day two and leave all my gear at around 6,900m, where I reached the northwest ridge. The climbing itself was not too hard—I would say 50–55° ice and M3/M4 on the ridge. But the rock quality was really bad. Halfway up the ridge I was sure I had made a big mistake in leaving the rope below, but in the end all was fine; I tried to stay really focused on the downclimb. My rack included a 60-meter 5mm rope, three ice screws, two cams, two nuts, one beak-style piton, slings, and carabiners.

You obviously take more risk when climbing solo, but it feels so great to move light and fast at high altitude on technical terrain. Furthermore, you're much more focused, which often results in better performance. Soloing at high altitude gave me fewer emotions during the climb than I'm used to. I was able to fade out psychologically hard moments and doubts much easier—maybe because my focus on getting to the top was stronger.

– Hansjörg Auer, Austria

**Historical Notes on Lupghar Sar:** The rarely visited Lupghar Sar massif comprises three peaks on a high summit ridge. The central summit is always quoted as the highest, though some photographic evidence suggests that it is lower than the east summit. Lupghar Sar West was first climbed in 1979 by Hans and Sepp Gloggner. Their route on the southwest ridge, which featured very rotten rock, was repeated in 1979 and 1980 by Japanese. The first of these Japanese expeditions continued east for more than 1.5km along the sharp ridge, with Tatsuo Nazuka, Hitoshi Shimizu, and Yuichi Wanantabe making the first ascent of the central (main) summit. Lupghar Sar East was climbed via the east ridge in 1987 by the Swiss Lukas Cestmir, Edi Furrer and Ruth Steinmann. In 2000, Frenchman Nicolas Sieger is reported to have climbed "Lupghar Sar West II (7,010m)," described as a peak around 2km northwest of Lupghar Sar West. The only high summit in this direction is a peak of around 6,800m a little over one kilometer to the northwest.

## Images



The big peaks at the western end of the Hispar Muztagh. (A) Peak 6,220m. (B) Lupghar Sar (7,215m). (C) Lupghar Sar West (7,157m), showing the 2018 route on the west face. (D) Distaghil Sar (7,885m). (E) Momhil Sar (7,414m). (F) Trivor (7,728m). (G) Khunyang Chhish (7,852m).



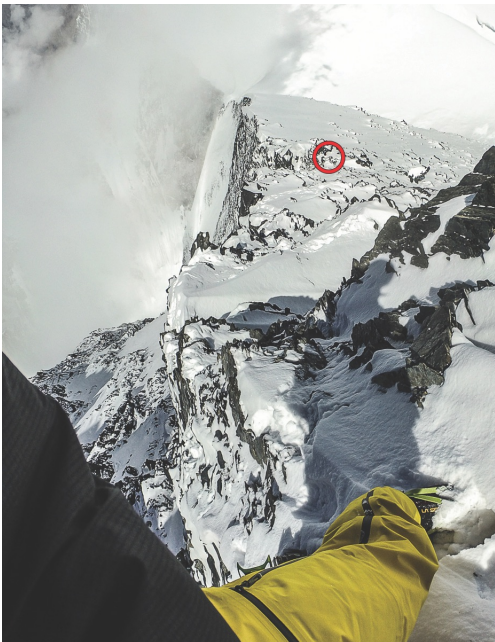
Lupghar Sar West seen from above the Baltbar Valley approach to the west. The original route, in 1979, took the upper right skyline.



The west face of Lupghar Sar West from the upper Baltbar Glacier, with the route of ascent largely hidden.



A corniced section of the summit ridge traversed by Auer.



Looking down the steep, loose ground of the upper northwest ridge on Lupghar Sar West. The red circle marks the author's gear cache, where he moved from the west face (left) onto the ridge. "Halfway up the ridge I was sure I had made a big mistake in leaving the rope below, but in the end all was fine."



Self-portrait on the summit of Lupghar Sar West.

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