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Evolution of Strategic Culture Based on Sun Tzu and Kautilya

A Civilisational Connect

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Introduction

The Art of War by Sun Tzu and *Arthasastra* by Kautilya rank among the finest war and political discourses ever written. Both have tremendous percipient elements embedded in them. Kautilya is often considered a perspicacious administrator, while Sun Tzu ranks high as a war strategist. Belonging to the oldest Indian and Chinese civilisations respectively, they also spelt out clear principles for espionage and stressed the importance of intelligence in all undertakings.

The *Art of War* was written to counsel rulers during a time when war was an ongoing and existential concern for the Chinese states. Sun Tzu highlights the empirical nature of warfare saying: "While an angered man may again be happy, and a resentful man again be pleased, a state that has perished cannot be restored, nor can the dead be brought back to life".[1]

For many Chinese states, being proficient in warfare was the only way to ensure survival in the Spring and Autumn periods, during which more than 100 independent states were exterminated.[2] *The Art of War's* strategy, based on deception, reflected an evolution from earlier periods of warfare and represented a new way to achieve victory.[3] Sun Tzu's *The Art of War,* written about 2,500 years ago, is arguably the most important work on the subject of strategy. Lionel Giles first translated it into English in 1910.

Kautilya's opus has stood the test of time as the principles laid out by him are astonishingly sound and relevant even today. The first translations into English from Sanskrit were compiled and published by R. Shamasastry in 1915. In the *Arthasastra*, the purpose of strategy was to conquer all other states and to overcome such equilibrium as existed on the road to victory. In Kautilya's view, states had an obligation to pursue self-interest, even more than glory. The wise ruler would seek his allies from among his neighbour's neighbours. The goal would be an alliance system, with the conqueror at the

centre: "The conqueror shall think of the circle of states as a wheel—himself at the hub and his allies, drawn to him by the spokes though separated by intervening territory, as its rim. The enemy, however strong he may be, becomes vulnerable when he is squeezed between the conqueror and his allies."[4] No alliance is conceived of as permanent, however. Even within his own alliance system, the king should "undertake such works as would increase his own power" and manoeuvre to strengthen his state's position and prevent neighbouring states from aligning against it.[5]

Kautilya insisted that the purpose of the ruthlessness was to build a harmonious universal empire and uphold *dharma*, the timeless moral order, whose principles were handed down by the gods. But the appeal to morality and religion was more for practical purposes than a principle in its own right – as elements of a conqueror's strategy and tactics, not imperatives of a unifying concept of order. The *Arthasastra* advised that restrained and humanitarian conduct was under most circumstances strategically useful: a king who abused his subjects would forfeit their support and would be vulnerable to rebellion or invasion; a conqueror who needlessly violated a subdued people's customs or moral sensibilities risked catalysing resistance.

Any study or comparison of Kautilya and Sun Tzu is not easy as the two differ significantly in terms of the canvas they cover.

- While Kautilya, the statesman, covers the entire spectrum of topics relevant to running a state, Sun Tzu dwells exclusively on warfare.
- Except for a few topics such as the factors to be considered before waging war and the intelligence system, the treatment of all other subjects varies substantially in both scope and content.
- Sun Tzu's teachings are largely conceptual, while Kautilya's teachings are practical, with conceptual underpinnings.
- Kautilya touches on issues related to the organisation of the Army, its training, the role of officers, the details of construction of forts, as well as administrative aspects related to salaries, rewards, etc.

While Sun Tzu, being a General, talks of war-fighting from the tactical level to the operational-strategic realms, Kautilya, being a statesman, has spoken of issues concerning the administration of a state, inter-state relations (foreign policy) and employment of the Army, covering

the gamut from the minor administrative and tactical levels to the grand strategic level. Yet, the common threads and diverging strands of their teachings offer a fascinating study. The effort in this monograph is to discover their points of synthesis, as well as the points of divergence, as elicited from their writings.

Background

Each civilisation has its own notion of war which cannot help but be influenced by its cultural background. Strategic culture is an inherited body of political-military concepts based on shared historical and social experiences and often embodied in classic military texts. Strategic culture may shape leaders' interpretation of international events and preferences for responses, i.e. how and under what circumstances military force should be used. China's classic texts on strategy could shape modern Chinese leadership thought in ways that may indicate present behaviour and attitudes toward the use of force, an emphasis on deception and duplicity, and a preference for offence.

Many policy-makers appear to hold a set of images or perceptions about the behaviour patterns of other states. These images amount to an understanding of the strategic cultures that shape the choices of their counterparts in other countries. These images and perceptions exert a powerful effect in shaping leadership expectations.

Strategic culture is often seen as a product of unique lessons that are internalised by successive generations of a society. This occurs primarily through the classic texts that embody a national political-military literary tradition. In this view, having learned these consistent lessons, leaders then form a set of relatively stable ideas about "how the world works." They also form stable preferences for strategic and military actions. Despite important theoretical and methodological challenges, the strategic culture approach is a potentially valuable complement to realist perspectives, i.e. a view of international politics among nation-states which are concerned about their own security and act in pursuit of their own interests. In this view, states exist in an anarchic system, in which they must rely on their own efforts to achieve security. Political realism also recognises the propensity of states to maximise power.

References to stratagem are replete in ancient and modern Chinese writings on conflict, and it comprises one of the most esteemed aspects of Chinese culture. Although the concept of stratagem is not unique to China, contemporary Chinese theorists identify the battle of ingenuity and intellect with the "endless flow of several thousand years of Chinese history."[6]

Kautilya and Sun Tzu are quintessential representatives of teachings on warfare during the ancient times in the two great civilisations of India and China. Their teachings had a profound influence on the conduct of military campaigns of their sovereigns during their lifetimes and even much later. While Sun Tzu is the better known and studied by Generals, national security experts and marketing gurus in the West, Kautilya, in spite of his impeccable credentials, has not got his due even within his own country, except from a perceptive few. Their masterpieces, viz. *The Art of War* and *Arthasastra* are rich storehouses of knowledge for both the discerning and lay readers. Their teachings definitely merit an indepth comparative study by 'students' of warfare and national security in order to draw pertinent lessons for the present and the future.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (*Sunzi bingfa*) is a remarkably lucid, compact and sometimes enigmatic treatise. Although the main purpose was to be applied in war, its philosophies can be applied in any activity involved with conflicts or competition. Written in the sixth century BCE, it emphasises the role of military force in international relations: "Warfare is the greatest affair of the state, the basis of life and death, the Way (*Tao*) to survival or extinction. It must be thoroughly pondered and analysed."[7] Several points about *The Art of War* are frequently noted. First, the text appears to suggest ambivalence about employing violence: "One who excels at employing the military, subjugates other people's armies without engaging in battle,"[8] and "No country," it adds, "has ever profited from protracted fighting."[9] Second, Sun Tzu places great emphasis on stratagem or deception. "Warfare is the way of deception," he writes.[10] Finally, Sun Tzu offers hope for the materially inferior to defeat a superior enemy by, among other things, assuming a posture of strategic defence. Fundamental political questions about the risks and purposes of war are also important

topics. Before Sun Tzu offers his famous prescriptions for offensive operations and deception, he offers his first lesson: war is dangerous and risky for all, including for any leader who might initiate it. Therefore, war should not be undertaken lightly.[11]

Over time, stratagems acquired a place of pride in China's war-fighting style. Sun Tzu's writings still impact Chinese thinking today and are salient to the idea of deception and perception management. He offers many ways of doing this, such as manoeuvre and the use of spies who deliberately leak false information.[12] In the main, he asserts: "He who knows the enemy and himself, will never in a hundred battles be at risk; he who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes win and sometimes lose; he who knows neither the enemy nor himself will be at risk in every battle.[13]

The first key to success is deceiving the enemy: "All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near".[14] To prevent the enemy from fathoming one's intentions is of the first importance. Thus deceived, the enemy will not know whether or where to attack or defend and, thus, will have to prepare on all fronts.[15] Such an enemy has his forces stretched, is consequently weak everywhere, and will certainly be defeated.

If it is essential to keep all knowledge of one's operations secret, it is equally vital to know as much as possible of the enemy's plans. Good intelligence is a second essential in war, and this lies behind Sun Tzu's view that an extensive spy network is a basic necessity. "Wars are won as a result of good 'foreknowledge' (i.e. intelligence) and this cannot be elicited from spirits, or from gods, or by analogy with past events, nor by astrological calculations. It must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation."[16] The Army relies on the information gathered by spies for its every move. There is no place, Sun Tzu argues, where espionage is not possible, and a large network of well-paid spies is a requisite and valuable investment for the state. As Sun Tzu stresses, knowledge or intelligence is of vital importance in war.[17]

The person responsible for strategy, and so for deceiving the enemy and evaluating the intelligence gathered by the spies is the commander, and it is

clear from Sun Tzu's description of the ideal commander that he must have a range of experience, knowledge and other attainments of a very high order. Firstly, and most obviously, he must be a good soldier, someone experienced in campaigning and with good knowledge of the principles of attack and defence; he must know how best to use each type of ground, how to manoeuvre, how best to combine his regular and special forces, and so on.[18]

The ideal General is described in language one would not find in a modern text. For example, he must be "serene and inscrutable",[19] capable of making "unfathomable plans". These are the terms often used to describe a person who has reached the spiritual goal of Taoism, namely enlightenment, and it is clear from other remarks in the text that Sun Tzu's ideal commander has achieved some such state: "How subtle and insubstantial, that the expert leaves no trace. How divinely mysterious, that he is inaudible. Thus, he is master of the enemy's fate."[20] The presence of this spiritual dimension is one of the ways in which *The Art of War* differs markedly from the work in the Western tradition with which it is regularly compared, *On War* (Vom Kriege, 1833) by Clausewitz.

The Taoist master responds spontaneously and appropriately to whatever conditions obtain, and this is a further quality which the commander must possess. As Sun Tzu points out, circumstances never repeat themselves exactly, and so the rules of strategy can never be set out in such detail that every situation is catered for in advance: "Therefore, when a victory is won, one's tactics are not repeated. One should always respond to circumstances in an infinite variety of ways".[21] Thus, "a skilled commander seeks victory from the situation and does not demand it from his subordinates".[22] In summary, every war is different; no specific rules of strategy or tactics can be formulated such that following them will always produce victory. Only the flexible, adaptable and inventive will win.

Success in war does not depend on military action alone. One of the most striking features of *The Art of War* is Sun Tzu's clear awareness of the context, both psychological and material, of war. To go to war when there are insufficient funds in the treasury is a recipe for failure and for the ultimate destruction of the state. War causes inflation, which exhausts the country waging the war. The economic costs of war constitute one of the reasons for Sun Tzu's repeated stress on the need to win quickly: "A speedy

victory is the main object in war ... there has never been a protracted war which benefited a country".[23] The second reason for speed is the need to maintain morale, both in the Army and in the state at large. Weary soldiers long for home and do not fight with the same zeal as fresh troops, and those involved in a long campaign will be aware of the hardships being caused to their families by the economy.

If all these conditions are met – if the right man is in command, able to deceive the enemy as to his intentions, while well supplied with intelligence from an extensive spy network, and so on – then the ultimate goal of war will be achieved. For Sun Tzu, the goal of war is not the wholesale destruction of the enemy: "Generally, in war, the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this. To capture the enemy's entire Army is better than to destroy it".[24] Behind this lies Sun Tzu's much-quoted remark: "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence".[25] The least good way to subdue an enemy is military action: the next best is to disrupt the enemy's alliances by strategy; the best of all is to employ strategy to defeat the strategy of the enemy. The greatest commander is not the victor of a hundred battles but he who does not have to do battle at all to win.

Kautilya's *Arthasastra*

Kautilya, also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta, was the *Guru* (mentor) of Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan Empire. His famous work, *Arthasastra* was written between the fourth and third centuries BCE, although it was discovered and translated only in 1904 by R. Shamasastry. It brought an insight into the political thought of ancient India, touching on several aspects of national and international strategy and domestic politics based on practical reality. It has confirmed the belief that there was a theory of governance based, not only on a pragmatic, but also on a strategic orientation, in ancient India. There is no doubt that it is based on earlier sources and is not an original work in the sense that the author has not thought out everything contained in it independently. The very nature of its contents, which required a thorough knowledge of many diverse subjects, makes it unlikely that any single author, howsoever gifted, could have produced this work by relying on his intrinsic intellectual powers

alone. The existence of earlier sources is clearly indicated by Kautilya in the text as well. Kautilya himself agreed that his work is based on the works of earlier Indian thinkers.[26]

Briefly, the theme of strategic thought in the *Arthasastra* encompasses:

- Politics has to be free from the influence of religion and morality to achieve political/strategic objectives. Kautilya is the first thinker who secularised politics and infused subterfuge and deceitful methods into policy and strategy to gain victory in wars.
- The most important aspect of Kautilya's strategic thought is his conception of elements of state (*prakritis*), such as the king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the Army and the ally. According to him, power lies in the use and application of these elements by the conqueror effectively.
- The *mandala* concept is a strategic reality perceived by Kautilya, consisting of eleven kingdoms that are strategically situated/located which the *vijigisu* (conqueror) has to tackle in order to achieve his goal. These are the declared aims of the *Arthasastra*.[27]
- Kautilya formulated a six-fold foreign policy (*sadgunya*), i.e. making peace, hostility, neutrality, show of force for war, seeking refuge with another king, and the dual policy of making peace with one king and hostility with another.
- Kautilya dilated on the use of various means for security of the king and the country, including the use of espionage against ministers and enemies, conduct of treacherous fighting, employment of secret weapons and even the use of chemical weapons in warfare.

Whether Kautilya maintained an ethical dimension to the *Arthasastra* in terms of diplomacy, is moot. However, following Vedic moral principles, he regards the state as a moral institution; but in terms of international relations, he emphasised on the separation of politics from theology and morality. He averred a political rationalism based on pragmatism, and traditional Vedic *dharma* (the path of righteousness and living one's life according to the codes of conduct as described by the Hindu scriptures). The state is a fragile organisation, and the statesman does not have the moral right to risk its survival on ethical restraint.

Contiguous regimes, in Kautilya's analysis, existed in a state of latent hostility. Whatever professions of amity a ruler might make, when his power

grows significantly, it would eventually be found that it was in his interest to subvert his neighbour's realm. This was an inherent dynamic of self-preservation to which morality was irrelevant. (This represents the ancient Indian philosophy of '*matsya nyaya*' or law of the fishes, where the big fish ate up the smaller fish.) Kautilya concluded that the ruthless logic of competition allowed no deviation: "The conqueror shall [always] endeavour to add to his own power and increase his own happiness." The imperative was clear: "If ... the conqueror is superior, the campaign shall be undertaken; otherwise not".[28]

Specific actions attributed to Kautilya's advice include deterring Alexander from following up on his initial success in Punjab in 327 BCE by playing up the Greek Army's fear of war elephants; and exaggerating the number in the elephant corps of the Magadha forces in a clever disinformation campaign that compelled Alexander to withdraw his war-weary army from India before it fought another major action.[29]

The traditional Hindu culture of warfare was expounded by Kautilya in the *Arthasastra*. His philosophy accepts that internal divisiveness and external aggression are inevitable and interrelated. Troubles in the core might encourage the external powers to threaten the periphery of the state. To tackle them, the trump card in Kautilya's arsenal is diplomacy which did not accept the clear division between war and peace.[30]

What is quite remarkable is that in the writing of the *Arthasastra*, Kautilya makes no reference to Chandragupta or his empire, does not mention Pataliputra, the capital of that empire, though some other localities are mentioned, and never anywhere hints that its author had any knowledge of the overthrow of the Nandas and the wars which brought Chandragupta his empire and the cessions made by Seleucus. His sovereign's name, his family, his country, his capital are passed over in absolute silence while meditating in his days of retirement on the maxims of policy.[31]

Convergence of Thoughts

The major areas of convergence in the works of Sun Tzu and Kautilya are their emphasis on analysing various factors before deciding to wage war e.g. evaluation of terrain, centrality of leadership, establishment of an effective

intelligence network and avoidance of logistic overreach. Both set great store in carefully weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy and own, continually. This enabled them to size up their opponents during peace-time and, thus, remain prepared for hostilities, whenever they arose.

Planning and Preparation for War

Both Sun Tzu and Kautilya laid considerable stress on the objective evaluation of geographical factors, estimating the strength of the enemy and his allies and every other input, from economic to social to military conditions in the enemy state, and the actual employable resources – human and material – of the *vijigisu* or conqueror.

Both emphasised the prerequisite of grasping the correlation of the forces of the enemy by the hegemon, understanding battlefield conditions, and forging seamless solidarity among own Generals and ranks. Lastly, was the necessity of the hegemon not interfering with the task of the Generals once a decision had been taken. On the length of a campaign, Sun Tsu stated: "All expeditions should be of short duration in conformity with the lightness of the undertaking or of longer duration, in conformity with the heaviness of the undertaking."[32]

Both Kautilya and Sun Tzu advocated a thorough understanding of oneself and of the enemy. While Kautilya said, "The conqueror should know the comparative strength and weakness of himself and of his enemy",[33] Sun Tzu said, "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril".[34] Both emphasised careful and deep analysis of various factors which could influence the outcome of war. Only if the factors were favourable, did they recommend waging war; otherwise, their advice was to avoid war. Kautilya advocated a detailed analysis of what he called the *prakritis* (constituent elements of the state) which bear a remarkable resemblance to the constituents of the modern concept of Comprehensive National Power (CNP). He averred that these constituents should not suffer from serious calamities (*vyasanas*) and should they so suffer, then either steps should be taken to rectify them or war should be avoided. He also advised the king to analyse the enemy from the same perspective as he analyses his own capability.

Kautilya also advised the king to weigh military factors such as power i.e. power of intellect, power of energy/enthusiasm and power of military might. He was also a strong proponent of the need to consider loss of men and money, analysis of profits and danger, and possibility of revolts in the rear prior to marching to war. On the other hand, Sun Tzu focusses primarily on the military aspects of war, though his grand strategic insight comes to the fore when he mentions the need to weigh the moral influence of the sovereign over the population which will assure support of the people for the war effort. Other factors which he considered are terrain and weather, quality of military leadership, doctrine, state of training, discipline and administration of the Army. Both Kautilya and Sun Tzu are generally in agreement, but it is in the consideration of comprehensive national power that Kautilya goes beyond Sun Tzu; this is understandable, considering the different roles performed by the two. The breadth and depth of Kautilya's analysis, however, is superior to that of Sun Tzu in this aspect. Both also had a clear vision of the end state desired from waging a campaign.

Terrain Factors

The recognition that topography is fundamental to military tactics, the classification of terrain types, and the correlation of basic tactical principles with particular terrains are all generally attributed to Sun Tzu, who was perhaps the first to systematically study these matters and develop a coherent body of operational principles.

A military appreciation of a situation consists not only of analysis of the enemy but also of the topography of the invasion route and likely battlegrounds. Consequently, Sun Tzu said: "Configuration of terrain is an aid to the Army. Analyzing the enemy, taking control of victory, estimating ravines and defiles, the distant and near, is the Tao of the superior General. One who knows these and employs them in combat will certainly be victorious. One who does not know these or does not employ them in combat will certainly be defeated."[35]

If the terrain is equally suitable to both the king and the enemy, the odds of victory are even. The requirement in each type of terrain is that the *vijigisu* shall undertake works to increase his power. Kautilya also mentions which

component of the Army i.e. elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry could be optimally employed in the various terrains and seasons, when natural factors of the environment could be taken advantage of as an input to ensure victory for the conqueror.

Conduct of Warfare

According to Sun Tzu, five fundamental factors, and seven elements determine victory. The five factors are:

- elements that create harmony between the ruler and the people;
- weather conditions;
- nature of the terrain;
- quality of military leadership; and
- doctrine, that is, Army structure, ordnance and logistics.

The seven crucial elements are:

- superior wisdom and ability of the ruler;
- talents of the commander (it is repeated here);
- superior command and control of the Army;
- better exploitation of the terrain;
- higher levels of troop strength;
- higher quality of training; and
- enlightened and correct distribution of rewards and punishments.

Kautilya's analysis is similar. He has assigned importance to the following factors that enable a king to succeed in war:

- the king's concern for the people's welfare;
- analysis of weather;
- nature of the terrain;
- estimation of relative strengths of the *vijigisu* and the enemy and the situation in the rear;
- acceptance of sound counsel;
- a well paid and honoured Army kept in full strength;
- a well organised structure of defence and its logistics;
- a sound grasp of the principle of interrelatedness of power, place (terrain) and time (season);

- an Army trained for battle-readiness; and
- the *vijigisu* being adept at waging four kinds war: by diplomacy, arms, concealed warfare and clandestine warfare.[36]

Both agree that if all these factors are present in favour of the conqueror, his victory in war is assured. If both the conqueror and the enemy are endowed with similar strengths, the advice of both is to avoid military conflict and seek other means to weaken the enemy and bide for an opportune time to strike. These conclusions, in essence, are valid even in the contemporary context of conventional strategies of waging wars at different levels.

Sun Tzu discusses concepts related to warfare at some length. His thoughts resemble teachings on manoeuvre warfare. He says: "Now an Army may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an Army avoids strength and strikes weakness,"[37] expounded on later by Liddell Hart in the "expanding torrent" theory.[38] He also discusses the division of forces into "extraordinary forces" and "normal forces"[39] and their employment. Further, he advocates dislocating the enemy by striking at an objective "which the enemy must succour"[40] thereby drawing the enemy into battle on a ground of own choosing. Sun Tzu was against protracted operations and believed strongly in either winning without fighting or, should one be forced to fight, victory must be achieved quickly. He continually exhorts the General to adapt the tactics according to the situation and the enemy. Kautilya also recommends striking an "inferior arm with a superior arm"[41] alluding to striking with strength at the enemy's weak spots.

Unlike Sun Tzu, Kautilya elaborates on logistics. He has detailed advice for the king on sustaining his forces on the battlefield, including provision of supplies, water in waterless regions, establishment of echeloned logistics dumps and a base camp to support the war, not significantly different from the present-day concept of logistics for an offensive. Sun Tzu identifies logistics as a factor to be considered and counsels against logistic overreach in protracted operations

There are some striking similarities between Kautilya and Sun Tzu on military mobilisation. Both highlight factors such as terrain, power and logistics

that are important to winning a war. Kautilya has highlighted the factors that are responsible for a successful military campaign: power, place, time, season, forces, i.e. when to mobilise different types of troops, i.e., standing Army, territorial Army, militias, etc, the possibility of revolts and rebellions, losses and gains of the campaign, and the likely dangers. Sun Tzu uses the word *'shi'*, translated as 'power' or 'potential', which refers to an inherent potentiality or tendency, an unfolding of a situation which can be foreseen or managed.

On power, Chanakya disagrees with his predecessors who emphasised on the bravery of the king alone to win a war. The first and foremost consideration before launching a military campaign is power. Here, power encompasses the intellectual power of the king—his own understanding of the situation and the counsel he gets from his ministers and others such as military Generals and intelligence reports— and the economic power to back and sustain the campaign. Place or geographic terrain is another important consideration before launching a campaign. He also highlights the timing of the campaign. Here time refers to both the season and the duration. If the season is unsuitable for a military campaign, then it is better to wait. Kautilya also describes the intricacies of appropriate campaigning and non-campaigning seasons. Power, place (terrain) and time are interdependent and only the right combination of the three can lead to victory. Highlighting the importance of time and place, Kautilya says: "In daytime, the crow kills the owl. At night, the owl kills the crow." Thus, the time of a fight is important. Similarly, "A dog on land, drags a crocodile; and a crocodile in water, drags a dog," to emphasise that the place of fight is important.[42] Nevertheless, in his perception, power trumps time and place.

Battle Formations

As regards the formations and their use, except for square and circular formations, the *Art of War* does not mention any other. Kautilya's battle arrays leveraged the strength of combined arms. He describes formations and arrays *(vyuha)* and, in some cases, their disposition in the battlefield. In the *Mahabharata*, several kinds of arrays were employed.[43] In this context, Kautilya has cited the authority of old masters such as Ushanas and Brihaspati, to validate his views.

The Kautilyan system, in many respects, envisaged set-piece battles like a game of chess, and the tactics lay in transforming basic formations on the

battlefield to meet the threats posed by the enemy's formations. Tactical flexibility was at the core of these transformations though the relative advantages of a specific formation are unclear.

A similar comment could be made on some of the formations in the Sun Tzu system which attributed special characteristics to certain formations without explaining how they are realised in operational terms. Chinese analysts have created, over the years, several conceptual diagrams on formations, but most seem incongruous, and merely the product of imagination.

It may appear that, while much ingenuity was expended on the formation of battle arrays, it did not have a decisive influence on the conduct of battles. A general impression is that, after the first engagement, there was little order maintained on the battlefield and that it was a combat of duels and push. However, in the *Arthasastra,* there is a clear enunciation of some fundamental principles of tactics, which show that the commanders of Armies followed some definite plan in conducting a campaign. For instance, it is laid down that when an Army is drawn up in battle order, the General must not move it *en masse* against the enemy but should rather assail the latter with one or two divisions; and when the enemy is thrown into confusion, he should follow up the first onset with the remaining divisions. A second principle enunciated is that a commander must begin a battle by striking that portion of the hostile Army which is occupied by weak and/or treacherous troops. Third, it is emphasised that he should make a rear attack on the enemy when a frontal attack is considered disadvantageous. Similarly, when an attack on one wing or flank is deemed unwise, the other wing or flank may be assailed. Having struck the front of the hostile Army, the commander should follow it up by an attack from the rear. He may also strike at the enemy's rear, and then, when it has wheeled around, he must attack it from the front. Finally, a commander must not press hard a weak but desperate foe, secure in a strong position for, "when a broken Army, reckless of life, resumes its attack, its fury becomes irresistible."[44]

Intelligence

Both Sun Tzu and Kautilya assigned great importance to the intelligence structure of the state. It was seen as one of the critical components in arriving at the right decisions, making the correct estimations of the enemy's

strength, and for launching clandestine operations. The intelligence set-up was developed into a highly sophisticated organisation, ruthlessly clinical in its execution and all-pervasive in its conceptual framework. In modern times, intelligence has become complex owing to technological innovations and the "leap" achieved by electronic and information technology. However, the employment of spies and intelligence personnel continues to remain a basic and valid constituent of warfare today.

Sun Tzu, with enviable precision, observed: "Now the reason a brilliant sovereign and a wise General conquers the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men is their foreknowledge of the enemy situation. This 'foreknowledge' cannot be elicited from spirits, or from gods, or by analogy with past events, nor by astrological calculations. It must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation".[45] Sun Tzu also believed that gathering military intelligence must be a dedicated, ongoing activity exploiting every possible channel to gain knowledge of the enemy. Open sources could only describe the visible, but not the invisible, plans, military secrets, the ruler's ambition, the personality of key officials, and the character of Generals. Accordingly, Sun Tzu strongly advocated the judicious employment of spies, categorising them according to their function and indicating the essentials of interpretation and control.

In a famous passage, Sun Tzu stated: "The means by which enlightened rulers and sagacious Generals moved and conquered others, that their achievements surpassed the masses, was advance knowledge." This sentence, in fact, summarises Sun Tzu's approach to warfare and distinguishes him from many historical political and military leaders who ignorantly committed their states to battle. As he asserted: "One who does not know the plans of the feudal lords cannot prepare alliances beforehand. Someone unfamiliar with the mountains and forests, gorges and defiles, the shape of marshes and wetlands, cannot advance the Army. One who does not employ local guides cannot obtain advantages of terrain."[46]

As regards Kautilya, his masterly chapters on secret service and covert operations, both in terms of concept and detail, have immense contemporary relevance. On the relationship among might (power), energy (enthusiasm) and counsel, he says that a good combination of all three is the best, but the

power of counsel is superior to mere might for, "the king with his eyes of intelligence and science is able to take counsel with small effort and over-reach enemies possessed of energy and might by conciliation and other means and by secret and occult practices"[47] ("occult" means are part of his concept of psychological warfare). Kautilya also wrote with chilling logic: "An assassin, single-handed, may be able to achieve his end with weapon, poison and fire. He does the work of the whole army or more".[48] He has also underlined the importance of the "miracle of secret instigation", i.e. subversion. The extensive nature of intelligence operations is indicated by the following guideline: "A king shall have his agents in the courts of the enemy, the ally, the middle and neutral kings to spy on the kings as well as their eighteen types of high officials".[49]

Sun Tzu has only provided a basic structure of intelligence, which presumably had further sub-divisions and sub-structures in operational terms. He has not discussed counter-intelligence and internal intelligence which is implicitly acknowledged when discussing the double agent – essentially a spy of the enemy who has been entrapped and turned around to serve the king. In Sun Tzu's view, the double agent should be paid handsomely as he is the kingpin for operations in enemy territory. He also upheld the comprehensive nature of intelligence when he averred that there is no situation where espionage is not possible. However, he made it clear that "only the enlightened sovereign and the wise General who is able to use the most intelligent people as spies can achieve great results".[50] Sun Tzu looked upon intelligence as a facilitator for realising the strategic and military objectives of the state within a well-prepared framework.

Kautilya, too, constructed a comprehensive structure of intelligence. The *Arthasastra* is replete with detailed analyses of the functions of the various categories of people who could be employed as spies and the kind of special roles they could perform. Kautilya, like Sun Tzu, in an astonishing similarity of views also states that no segment of society – one's own and the enemy's – and no place is beyond the scope of intelligence.

The Kautilyan system of intelligence encompasses all spheres of human activity and assigns roles for various categories of people in society. The complete list of spies would suggest that categories such as prostitutes, monks, bar owners, etc. were also utilised to further the cause of the king.

What appears to be notable in the Kautilyan system is the separate unit controlled by the Chancellor and the bifurcation of internal and external intelligence units. The coordination of inputs from these units was presumably made at the higher levels. It is also significant that the Chancellor's unit dealt exclusively with economic crimes and performed anti-corruption and vigilance functions, an amazingly sophisticated concept in the context of the times. Kautilya also appears to have attached considerable importance to economic intelligence.

Kautilya has gone into great detail on targets of subversion in the enemy country – apart from the 18 categories of high officials, the methodology of entrapment of enemies, including the use of the "honey-trap", bringing about dissensions in the enemy king's family, particularly among the princes, etc. In short, Sun Tzu sharply highlights the basics, while Kautilya, besides doing that, has added an operational manual to his treatise in the sphere of intelligence; they complement each other. Both understood the value of an effective intelligence system.

Deception

The concept of deception forms a major facet of Sun Tzu's treatise. He observes unequivocally that all warfare is based on deception, which is of several kinds such as feigning incapacity when ready to attack; formulation of baits to "lure the enemy"; when near the enemy, making it appear one is farther away, etc.[51] According to Sun Tzu, deception is two-fold. It means both to delude others into believing in one thing, while doing exactly the opposite, as well as the art of outmanoeuvring the opponent by a deceptive strategy. Further, another idea of Sun Tzu, of void and actuality, i.e. creating an illusion of emptiness or sufficiency, is an extension of the concept of deception. Sun Tzu considered it a fundamental factor in warfare.

Kautilya has also taken into account the art of deception in war. However, he has included it in the category of covert activities and psychological warfare which he has mentioned as tricks, stratagems and even occult practices. Both believed in using deception as a tool to advance the cause of the conqueror or king.

Leadership

Both Kautilya and Sun Tzu emphasised the importance of leadership as a factor to be evaluated before deciding to wage a campaign. However, while Kautilya discusses the leadership qualities required of a ruler, Sun Tzu discusses the qualities of a General. While the sovereign was also the General during Kautilyan times, the roles of the sovereign and General were separate in Sun Tzu's era. Kautilya emphasises on the qualities of intellect, energy (enthusiasm), boldness, a keen mind, control over the senses, and justness in dispensation of rewards and punishment.

These qualities are also emphasised in a military leader by Sun Tzu who covers them in greater detail. Sun Tzu stresses on intelligence, courage, humaneness, sternness and trustworthiness besides calmness, self-control and impartiality, and also goes on to warn of the dangerous qualities in a military leader which could ruin an Army and its operations: recklessness, cowardice, quick temper, sensitiveness (too delicate a sense of honour) and compassionate nature.[52] Sun Tzu's thoughts on leadership are more relevant to a military leader today.

Management of External Relations

Kautilya focusses a significant portion of his treatise on foreign affairs. He has no parallel in his times in the exposition on international relations. His six-fold policy (*sadgunya*), *mandala* theory (circle of kings) and four *upayas* of *sama* (conciliation), *dana* (gifts), *bheda* (subversion) and *danda* (force) hold relevance even today in inter-state and inter-personal relations. The perspicacity in Kautilyan teachings on foreign affairs would be apparent even for the uninitiated. Sun Tzu did not focus on foreign affairs except for a mention of the need to disrupt the enemy's alliances in order to weaken him.

Sun Tzu has attached importance to diplomacy and foreign policy as an effective instrument to further the interests of the state. For instance, he was in favour of forging an alliance between his Wu kingdom and that of Qi in order to battle the adjoining kingdom of Cu, i.e. adopting the strategy of disrupting the enemy's alliances. It is also the idea of defeating the enemy by strategic considerations. Sun Tzu observed that "the highest realisation of warfare is to attack the enemy's plans; next is to attack their alliances; then is to attack their Army; and the lowest is to attack their fortified cities".[53]

As may be gleaned from this succinct statement, disruption of the enemy's alliances is placed second in terms of priority after a strategic understanding of his plans.

Kautilya has shown considerable concern about the issue of dealing with the enemy in the rear and how a weak king should cope with both invasion and war.[54] In sum, both Sun Tzu and Kautilya attached considerable importance to foreign policy in the overall strategic structure of war and peace. Both advocated war only after critical evaluations and sufficient augmentation of power. Both believed that wars are expensive and that the gains should outweigh the possible losses; and foreign policy is a means to create conditions for maximising profits with a minimum or acceptable level of deficit. This will be achieved after a fundamental analysis of the correlation of power among various state-actors within a given strategic environment.

China-India Matrix

The military tradition and culture of both China and India, in ancient times, had a vigorous military culture promoted by various kingdoms competing for supremacy. But there is a crucial difference: Chinese Generals and analysts sustained military thinking as an independent discipline. For instance, even after Sun Tzu had passed from the scene, his descendant Sun Bin, who lived more than a hundred years later, wrote a treatise on *Military Methods*, which expounded on some practical issues in war, by elaborating on Sun Tzu's ideas. The essence of traditional Chinese military thinking has been both inherited and updated by contemporary Chinese statesmen and strategists. In the subsequent centuries, other great Generals amplified further the basics on war in the light of their experiences and the changed times. Even Mao Zedong, a great military strategist, cited Sun Tzu in his writings on war. Both strategic cultures also invested a moral dimension to wars, such as righteous war to restore moral order (China) and *dharmayuddha*, or just war to punish the unjust (India). The vital difference is that China's strategic culture was constantly debated down the centuries.

Both Sun Tzu and Kautilya, while systematically exploring the taxonomy of strategy, the mechanics of wars and the architecture of peace, took into account the ideas and practices of the earlier epochs. Kautilya particularly, makes repeated references to these – either in terms of affirmation

or repudiation. Their genius lay in absorbing the essence of the past and formulating in innovative and unique fashion the fundamentals of war and peace.

Both were sage-like personalities. Sun Tzu had practical experience of war. On the other hand, Kautilya learnt about war by constant observation and analysis. However, in popular perception, the latter is more renowned for his exhaustive dilations on management of the state, and on foreign policy. His contribution to the study of war, which is equally outstanding, has, for inexplicable reasons, not been adequately studied or understood.

One of Sun Tzu's most famous aphorisms is, "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."[55] Rather than a call for peace, Sun Tzu recognised the inherent risk of armies entangled in a protracted war that depresses a soldier's will power, drains the state's resources, and presents third party states with an opportunity to take advantage of your weakness. According to Sun Tzu, even if a state is able to win many battles and master tactics, if it engages in protracted warfare, it will not benefit.[56] In order to win with a minimal use of force, *The Art of War* encourages Generals to use deception to shape circumstances so that they are able to win the war before the first battle. In *The Art of War,* Sun Tzu describes four offensive tactics in order of effectiveness. The first tactic is to attack the enemy's strategy, the second is to disrupt an enemy's alliances, the next is to attack the enemy's Army, and the least preferred is to attack the enemy's cities.[57] In Sun Tzu's list, the two most effective strategic choices do not depend on the use of force, but instead rely on adroit diplomacy and deception.

Sun Tzu's higher order tactics require a deep knowledge of both the enemy's and one's own capabilities. He makes the vital importance of such knowledge clear, warning that "if ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril."[58] Sun Tzu also puts high value on the gathering of intelligence and the use of spies.[59] In fact, he devotes the whole of his last chapter to the use of secret agents, and delineates a variety of agents by purpose and origin. For example, some agents are to be used as traditional spies who gather information and report to the General, inside agents who are enemy officials, enemy spies who are bribed into becoming double agents, and expendable agents who are given false information to

disclose to the enemy after being captured. With knowledge of the enemy, and knowledge of one's own capabilities, the General and the sovereign are able to make plans carefully and shape the enemy's perceptions. In this way, secret agents are vital, and akin to an Army's eyes and ears.[60]

Sun Tzu clearly puts deception above the use of force in warfare, but *The Art of War* also includes instructions about the best manner to fight a war. Sun Tzu advocates an indirect form of warfare that is dependent on manoeuvre rather than focussing on attacking and destroying the enemy's Army, like Clausewitz advocates.[61] This strategy depends on restraint and timing, shaping the situation so that when the enemy makes a mistake or presents a weakness, it is possible to strike so that the battle is won before it starts. Even when engaged in fighting, the actual outcome depends on the use of deception and psychological factors. In this way, it is more important to attack an enemy's will than to win a tactical battle. Sun Tzu describes this as the moral factor, and advises to "avoid the enemy when his spirit is keen and attack him when it is sluggish and his soldiers homesick."[62] As a corollary to this point, it is necessary to maintain the morale of your own troops through fair treatment and proper administration of rewards and punishments to maintain loyalty.[63] The attention to moral factors, deception, timing, and diplomacy that are necessary to preserve the state and to prevent a prolonged war that is costly and enervating, and threatens state survival, is the core of Sun Tzu's strategic thought.

Kautilya strongly believed that the economy of a state keeps it running. The government and the Army cannot be effective if the treasury is decrepit. "Spiritual good and sensual pleasures depend on material well-being."[64] In other words, the well-being of the state and its people will never happen if the economy is poor. "All undertakings are dependent first on the treasury."[65] Every good in political life – peace, conquest, order, the correct social and class structure – depends on the state acquiring wealth and using it wisely. He believed that the king can be happy only if his people are happy and, "therefore, being ever active, the king should carry out the management of material well being."[66]

An analysis of most insurgencies in the world shows that Kautilya was accurate in his belief that the greatest cause of insurgencies is societal discontent and advocates that the state should attach great importance to

the well-being of the people for, if they become impoverished, they become greedy and rebellious. He also averred that "an internal rebellion is more dangerous than an external threat because it is like nurturing a viper in one's bosom."[67] Rebellions (insurgencies) were classified based on the affected region and on who their sponsors were. The similarities in the methods used today and those espoused by Kautilya are salient.

In the Kautilyan system, the Generals and their chief, the *Senapati*, were privileged elite. In fact, the *Senapati* was paid the highest salary, at the same scale as the five other high categories of officials, the priests, and the crown prince. This was to dissuade him, among other things, from acts of treachery. However, the king ruled with the help of councillors, ministers and other officials down to the village level. These high civilian officials, particularly the Chancellor, controlled the purse-strings and conducted the affairs of the state. And a tight-knit intelligence system kept a watch over their conduct. In this sense, the military was subordinate to the civil authority.

The *Arthasastra* is not only concerned about making conquests, it also discusses the strategies and tactics for the prevention of conquest by others. Thus, a large portion of the book is devoted to statecraft and administration of the state. But, whether in conquering others or in preventing conquest, the *Arthasastra* takes conflictual relationships between states as the norm. Therefore, management of these occupies an important place in Kautilya's thinking.

Despite the great similarities between the ideas of Sun Tzu and Kautilya, there remains one major difference which has to do with the different social systems of India and China. Sun Tzu's idea was that subjugating the enemy's Army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence. Such a doctrine would have been inconceivable for Kautilya because that would have devalued the entire hereditary warrior *varna*. For them, it was a disgrace to die anywhere except on the battlefield. A world without war was, even theoretically, inconceivable to Kautilya. In India, a professional warrior class (*Kshatriyas*) was institutionalised as part of the four-fold caste system. They were looked upon as a distinct group of people to lead the nation at war, although the Army itself was conscripted from the merchant and peasant classes. Ancient China did not have a professional warrior class, although men of nobility led the Army.

Kautilya argued that national interest should override moral principles inasmuch as the moral order depends upon the continued existence of the state. Yet, Kautilya never advocated the conquest of lands outside of South Asia. This line of thought is still visible in modern Indian foreign policy. India has never taken the initiative to invade a foreign country, and it has never shown interest in areas beyond South Asia.

Kautilya warns against calamities which adversely affect the functioning of the Army which include not giving due honour, insufficient salaries and emoluments, low morale, etc. He makes an incisive observation that an unhonoured Army, an unpaid Army, or an exhausted Army will fight if honoured, paid and allowed to relax but a dishonoured Army with resentment in its heart will not do so.[68]

There are important similarities between Sun Tzu and Kautilya in delineating strategic and tactical issues relating to war and peace. The principles laid down by them remain, though the march of technology has rendered specific issues and battle formations outdated. However, their approach to issues of war and peace, intelligence and foreign policy has contemporary relevance. Both despised unbridled aggrandisement without thought or unplanned adventurist offensives. Both considered ensuring the safety of the state and the welfare of its people as the ultimate objective. If a state could achieve its objectives without war, that should be the most preferred course, said Sun Tzu. He observed: "Attaining one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the pinnacle of excellence. Subjugating the enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence".[69] Likewise, Kautilya said: "An archer letting off an arrow may or may not kill a single man, but a wise man using his intellect can kill, even reaching unto the very womb".[70] Kautilya was not a war-monger but a calculative and cautious statesman. If the end could be achieved by non-military methods, even by methods of intrigue, duplicity and fraud, he would not advocate an armed conflict.[71]

Sun Tzu's ideas have seen some criticism by Chinese Communist military Generals, who waged a "protracted war" and defeated their Nationalist rivals and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The main observation is that the advice of not fighting protracted wars may have been valid in Sun Tzu's time when states were small, and populations and resources limited. In fact, even before the "war of liberation", there

were wars of longer duration in China. In the contemporary context, it may be pointed out that the enemy also has a vote in the prosecution of a war and the conflict termination goals may not be easily achieved. Hence, the proposition that the duration of the war is determined by resources, morale, and other factors, both internal and external, remains a valid ancient truism.

Many scholars have addressed the concept of strategic culture in India. George Tanham touched off the debate, with the hypothesis that India has not had a strategic thinker nor a tradition of strategic thought.[72] Others have argued that India possessed a strategic culture, though it was subsumed by foreign rule over several centuries. The term strategy has traditionally been used to refer to the way that military power is used by governments in the pursuit of their interests. How are these interests shaped? A strategic culture approach tackles this question by considering the relevance of the cultural context in influencing strategic preferences.[73] Moreover, strategic culture does not merely deal with the traditions of using military power but also diplomacy, foreign policy, internal/external threats, international relations, etc. in order to protect and promote national interest so as to achieve political, economic, military, national and international goals. Scholars disagree over what culture is, how it can be identified and what it does. This has obvious implications for any attempt to develop a concept of strategic culture. Moreover, they also disagree over the extent to which culture plays a role in shaping the concept of strategic culture. However, the fact remains that culture is an inherent (strong) factor that influences policy-makers in shaping national strategy, though its effectiveness may differ from nation to nation and situation to situation, depending upon their strategic environment.

Unlike many other contemporary Indian thinkers who focussed on religion and thought of heavenly realms, Kautilya had his feet firmly planted on the ground and thought about the ways to make a country rich and powerful. The *Arthasastra* is one of the first books by any Indian author to highlight the importance of the military in the smooth functioning of the state. In other words, he was a realist who understood the power of a strong standing military in sending out a clear signal to other countries and its contribution to bolstering national pride.

Elements of a calculated realism, as well as idealism, are found in both traditions. Classic Indian texts like the *Arthasastra* and *Mahabharata*, paint an even more vivid picture of a zero-sum world of conquest than Chinese texts such as *The Art of War*. The classical traditions of both countries must also share space in today's leadership curricula with many modern (including Western) works on strategy and politics. References to ancient texts are, thus, not sufficient grounds to differentiate expectations about modern Chinese or Indian strategic preferences or behaviour.

In India, there has been no tradition of using, as a constituent of strategic culture, a sense of history, of a recording of it, evaluating and assessing it, and then utilising it as an input in decision-making. This can be variously explained: on account of a lack of unity, there being no one India; that the Indian tradition is more oral; that religious texts, in any event, have always had greater merit. No matter what the causes, the consequence of this absence (of a sense of history) has significantly affected the development of India's strategic thought. History is an integral part of military science but, while ancient Indian texts on every conceivable subject abound, there is none, other than Kautilya, that has detailed the military science of India. There is another factor: of geography, of a sense of territory. Indian nationhood being largely cultural and civilisational, and Indians being supremely content with what was theirs, feared no loss of it, for it – the civilisational – was as unconquerable as the spirit. Thus, both were absent: a territorial consciousness, and a strategic sense about the protection of the territory of residence.[74]

Neither China nor India has any record of international conquest, but each has a significant record of using force on its periphery, often in disputed border regions.[75] China's recent escalatory behaviour in the East and South China Seas has raised the risk of an armed clash there. Both Beijing and New Delhi may become more willing to contemplate the use of force as they redefine their interests in line with growing relative power.[76]

The *Arthasastra* is testimony to the constant and unchanging nature of war. Studies of military history show that certain features of conflict and warfare constantly recur; that relationships between type of action and success often remain the same; that certain circumstances and moments have, time and time again, proved decisive. The past being a prologue, underscores the relevance and significance of studies of military history such as propagated

by the *Arthasastra*. It also underscores an ancient verity with regard to the relationship of a state and its society: that nothing can be crushed by a blow from without until it is ready to perish from decay within.

A significant shortcoming of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* is that it does not discuss the nature of war. Another dichotomy in his work can be observed when he writes: "Regard your soldiers as your children", and "Command them with civility but keep them under control by iron discipline."[77] It seems that he was propagating concern for soldiers and attention to discipline in the Army. But he went so far as to maintain that the commander "should be capable of keeping his officers and men in ignorance of his plans . . . He drives his men now in one direction, now another, like a shepherd driving a flock of sheep, and none knows where he is going ... The business of a General is to kick away the ladder behind soldiers when they have climbed up a height."[78] These can be said to be reactionary ideas of looking down upon one's men.

The second shortcoming in Sun Tzu's work is that he has overemphasised the function of Generals. He stated: "The General who understands how to employ troops is the minister of the people's fate and arbiter of the nation's destiny." Related to this was another view of his: "There are occasions when the commands of the sovereign need not be obeyed."[79] There have been quite a few Generals who, affected by this view, used it as a pretext for not obeying orders from the supreme command. It causes irremediable damage to the nation if the long-term and overall interests of the state are given up for the sake of local interests in the battlefield.

It is argued that in ancient times, communications were poor and difficult and situations at the front changed quickly, so commanders had to act arbitrarily in order to cope with the changing situation. Tenable as the argument might be, the situation today has greatly changed. Nowadays, with the help of telecommunication, television and satellites, the supreme command has every small change in the battlefield at its fingertips. It is, therefore, entirely in a position to readjust its deployment or tactics in accordance with the new situation. A commander is in no way allowed to disobey orders from the supreme command for local interest. A common rule of war, Sun Tzu's principle "there are occasions when the commands of the sovereign need not be obeyed" is now obsolete.

Some of Sun Tzu's principles are too rigid and mechanical. For example: "Do not thwart an Army which is returning homewards. One must leave a way of escape to a surrounded enemy, and do not press a desperate enemy too hard."[80] These principles are contradictory to many others in *The Art of War* itself. For instance, consider his advice to "... avoid the enemy when its spirit is keen and attack it when it is sluggish and the soldiers are homesick".[81] It is just the opposite of the former. The latter principle is, perhaps, the correct one. Sun Tzu also suggested surrounding an enemy when you are ten to his one. This is the idea of a "war of annihilation", which is certainly correct. Of course, you should not leave a way of escape to the enemy if you surround him. Therefore, his doctrine to "not press a desperate enemy too hard" is simply archaic.

When Chanakya wrote the *Arthasastra*, he was positing from a position of strength – an empire he had helped to create. This obviously gave a certain amount of certitude to his pronouncements. "Kautilya assumed that he lived in a world of foreign relations in which one either conquered or suffered conquest. He did not say to himself, 'Prepare for war, but hope for peace,' but instead, 'Prepare for war, and plan to conquer.' Diplomacy was just another weapon used in the prolonged warfare that was always either occurring or being planned for".[82]

Chanakya never advocated a "balance of power" theory: in the 20th century, international relations theorists have defended the doctrine of the balance of power, because equally armed nations will supposedly deter each other, and, therefore, no war will result. One does find this argument occasionally in Kautilya: "In case the gains [of two allies of equal strength] are equal, there should be peace; if unequal, fight," or, "The conqueror should march if superior in strength, otherwise stay quiet".[83] The balance of power theorists argue that arming oneself is a path to ensuring peace through deterrence. Chanakya wanted his *vijigisu* to arm the nation in order to find or create a weakness in the enemy and conquer it.

Sun Tzu has attached primary importance to defeating the enemy's strategy, followed by diplomacy to break his alliances, before actually using the Army. In other words, "knowledge" of the adversary's thinking and plans enables a more effective use of power which is augmented by destroying his alliance systems. Moreover, Sun Tzu also believed that the economics of war has both short-term and long-term implications for the welfare of the king

(state). Finally, what the Chinese refer to as *ch'i* is the individual and collective psychological condition to promote the cause of victory. Kautilya and Sun Tzu formulated their power theories in an amazingly similar fashion. They are valid even in the contemporary context of war and peace, in particular, and safeguarding of national security, in general.

Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* contains many doctrines, principles and rules that are still of practical and universal significance. The work is a valuable asset for military professionals and will remain so in the future. He is pithy and epigrammatic and each principle of his could be expanded into a detailed statement. On the other hand, Kautilya is meticulous in his details and has woven a tapestry of thoughts. Sun Tzu's work has a disciplined elegance, while Kautilya's treatise has solid details. Sun Tzu was a thinking General who knew the multifaceted compulsions of a state, while Kautilya was an all-pervasive strategist who understood the components and compulsions of war. Their teachings, though representative of the socio-political milieu of their times and rooted in their geographical environment, still have plenty to offer to the practitioners of military art, in particular, and national security, in general, around the world.

The *Art of War* and the *Arthasastra* are testimony to the constant and unchanging nature of war. Studies of military history show that certain features of conflict and warfare constantly recur; that relationships between type of action and success often remain the same; that certain circumstances and moments have, time and time again, proved decisive. Their texts underscore the relevance and significance of ancient wisdom. They also emphasise an ancient verity with regard to the relationship of a state and its society – that nothing can be crushed by a blow from without until it is ready to perish from decay within. There is need for a critical investigation of the *Arthasastra* with an objective of making it relevant to today's conditions. It would bring out the true worth of the *Arthasastra* and also situate it in the body of Indian strategic thought.[84]

Conclusion

In an increasingly complex world, the missions of the armed forces are more diverse and complex than ever before. The challenges they face today constitute myriad problems such as proxy war, insurgency,

terrorism and unresolved border issues. However, the march of time has not changed the fundamentals of warfare. In times of peace and tension, the armed forces are a powerful instrument of the nation's foreign policy. In times of crisis and conflict, they are the foremost expression of the nation's will and intent. Thus, the expectations of a nation from its military are diverse and wide-ranging. Modern warfare encompasses military, political, economic and diplomatic aspects. Warfare continues to be based on principles and precepts to be followed and applied. These verities are eternal.

Modern warfare is differentiated from its earlier forms by the expansion of technology. War is a constituent element of the history of mankind. Control of the armed forces rests with the state, which can limit the use of the military when it manages violence. The margin of superiority is generally assumed to determine the degree to which violence can be limited. It is also accepted that the greater the degree to which a margin of superiority is predominant, the less is the likelihood of it being challenged through war. If there is a challenge, the greater the margin of superiority, the more quickly can the challenge, in theory, be suppressed and the less sustained the violence would be. The rationale for strong armed forces is, thus, axiomatic. Kautilya understood this and enunciated many military strategies. He does not make much distinction between military strategy and statecraft as he believed that warfare is an extension, and an integral part, of statecraft.

War is fundamentally a human endeavour. It is a clash of wills involving political leaders, soldiers, and civilian populations of opposing states and non-state actors. In today's world, the challenges of global security are no different from those that vexed the Mauryan Empire in 300 BCE. A cogent and dispassionate analysis of the *Arthasastra* reveals stark similarities between the problems faced by Kautilya's ideal state and the modern scourge of terrorism and insurgencies. Present-day warfare adheres to ancient patterns. The truism that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"[85] applies in military affairs. If a society seeks to live in peace, it should be prepared for war; a unilateral desire for peace cannot ensure peace.

Notes

1. Sun Tzu: *The Art of War* (Translated with an introduction by Samuel B. Griffith and a foreword by B. H. Liddell Hart) (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 143.
2. Ralph D. Sawyer, Sun Tzu: *The Art of War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), pp.9-11.
3. Derek M. C. Yuen, *Deciphering Sun Tzu: How to Read the Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 52.
4. R.P. Kangle, Kautilya *Arthashastra,* Part III, A Study (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1965), Kangle's work is highly recommended. All references in this monograph are from this text. Kautilya *Arthasastra* 6.2.13-29
5. Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History* (New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd., 2014), pp.194-198.
6. See Shi Yuedong "Command Decision Making Stratagem," in *The Science of Command Decision Making* (Beijing: PLA Press, 2005).
7. Sawyer, n.2. For other works, see Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Roger Ames (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993 and Lionel Giles, *Sun Tzu on the Art of War: the Oldest Military Treatise in the World* (Toronto: Global Language Press, 2007). All references to *The Art of War* in this monograph are from the 1996 Sawyer translation.
8. Sawyer, n.2*,* p. 177.
9. Ibid., p. 173
10. Ibid., p. 168.
11. This most basic, most conservative, and cautionary lesson is also taught by Kautilya. In the Western tradition, it is also taught by Clausewitz. See Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 86-87; 101; 104; 119-121; 259-260.
12. Sawyer, n.2, p. 170.
13. Ibid., p. 111.
14. Ibid., ch.1.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., ch.13.
17. Ibid., ch.3.
18. Ibid., chs. 7-11.
19. Ibid., ch. 11.
20. Ibid., ch. 6.
21. Ibid., ch. 6.
22. Ibid., ch. 5.
23. Ibid., ch. 9 and 11.
24. Ibid., ch. 3.
25. Ibid., ch. 3.
26. S.Vijayaraghavan and R. Jayaram, *Political Thought* (New Delhi: Sterling Publication Pvt. Ltd., 1994), p. 305.
27. Ibid., pp.19-20.
28. Kangle, n.4, pp.135-136.1
29. Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, 2006), p.92.
30. Daniel P. Marston and Chandar Sundaram, *A Military History of India and South Asia* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), p.9.
31. A.B. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford, 1928), p. 459.
32. Kangle, n.4, 9.1.52.
33. Ibid., 9.1.13.
34. Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu, The Illustrated Art of War* (trans.) with a Foreword by B.H. Liddell Hart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 125.
35. Sawyer*,* n.2, ch. 10.

36. Kangle, n.4, 10. 6-8 and 11.1-2.
37. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 6.
38. In 1920, Liddell Hart wrote the Army's official Infantry Training manual that included his "battle drill" system evolved in 1917 and his so-called "expanding torrent" method of attack, which grew out of infiltration tactics introduced in 1917–18. The expanding torrent effect describes the concentrated, expanding force applied to points of weakness identified in the indirect approach. Speed, exploitation of disruption and enabling those on the ground to act autonomously are crucial to success. The aim of the expanding torrent effect is to achieve confusion, disruption and demoralisation.
39. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 5.
40. Ibid., ch. 6.
41. Kangle, n.4, 10.6.44
42. Ibid., pp. 407-408, also 9.1.26-33.
43. See YR. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *War in Ancient India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1987), pp. 268-276.
44. R. Shamasastry, *Kautilya's Arthashastra* (New Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2012), p. 397, also Kautilya *Arthasastra,* 10.3.57.
45. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 1
46. Ibid., ch. 7.
47. Kangle, n.4, 9.6.145.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 13.3.173.
50. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 13.
51. Ibid., ch. 1.
52. Ibid., ch. 8.
53. Ibid., ch. 3.
54. Kangle, n.4, 7.8.114-115.
55. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 4.
56. Ibid., ch. 2.
57. Ibid., ch. 3.
58. Ibid.
59. Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1992), p.111.
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61. Handel, n.59, p. 42.
62. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 7.
63. Ibid., ch. 9.
64. Kangle, n.4, 1.7.7, 14.
65. Ibid., 2.8.1, 85.
66. Ibid., 1.19.35, 34.
67. Ibid., 9.5.143
68. Ibid., 8.5.133
69. Sawyer, n.2, ch. 5.
70. Kangle, n.4, 10.6.51
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