

# Indigenous Historical Knowledge

Kautilya and His Vocabulary

(VOLUME III)

Editors

Pradeep Kumar Gautam

Saurabh Mishra

Arvind Gupta

*idsa*

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES & ANALYSES

रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान



INDIGENOUS HISTORICAL  
KNOWLEDGE

*Kautilya and His Vocabulary*

VOLUME III



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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES & ANALYSES  
NEW DELHI



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**Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary**

***Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (Editors)***

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# Preface

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We place here before you this volume, the third in a series of small steps taken by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) that began in 2012. The chapters are select papers from an international seminar that was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) on April 9, 2014. Two scholars of Sanskrit (Patrick Olivelle and Mark McClish) from the United States participated via internet on Skype and we could harness current technology to network and obtain ideas and concepts both from Sanskritists and Indologists. We could also engage with the scholars by having a question and answer session. Balbir Singh Sihag's paper was read out as he was not available online. All the presentations are available on YouTube at the IDSA website.

We want to tell our readers that two methods are in popular use to write Sanskrit words in Roman alphabets. The first is to use diacritical marks to stress on the non-English sounds and pronunciation, and the second is transliteration without using diacritical marks; the word *Arthaśāstra* may be written as *Arthashastra*, for example. The chapters will follow both patterns as used by the authors.

The book is arranged first with the welcome remarks of the then Director General, Dr. Arvind Gupta, who places the idea behind this exercise in context. Like in the previous two national seminars in October 2012 and October 2013, the then National Security Adviser (NSA) Shri Shivshankar Menon delivered a brief keynote address. The chapters have been placed in the same sequence as was in the seminar in two parts. Part I: *Revisiting Concepts, Issues from Text* and Part II: *Strategic Culture, Negotiations and International Relations*.

Patrick Olivelle rightly terms the Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (KA) as the most precious work in the range of Sanskrit literature. Chapter 1, 'Economy, Ecology, and National Defence in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*,' in Part I of this book, deals with impact of economic growth on ecological management and centrality of economic strength of national defence and territorial expansion. Perhaps what may interest political scientists is his interpretation of wars of wits and outmanoeuvring both in the internal and external dimensions with the strategy of *atisaṃdhāna*. Chapter 2, Mark McClish, 'Non-Aggression Pacts and Strategic Partnerships in Kautilyan Foreign Policy' likewise is a very detailed analysis and a pioneering effort of its kind. The focus is on the concept of peace pacts (*saṃdhi*) in the *Arthashastra*'s seventh book and what their study can tell us about the text itself. Non-Aggression Pacts and Strategic Partnerships are explained which, as in the case of Chapter 1, will surely be noticed by political scientists to relate the contemporary issues of strategic partnerships and non-aggression pacts.

In the KA, espionage and other 'operational' activities of the secret service—notably 'active measures' and 'covert action'—are addressed often and in detail. In contrast, Kautilya seems to say very little about intelligence analysis, assessment and estimates which provide the basis of strategic planning and grand strategy—and are key components of statecraft. Michael Liebig's Chapter 3, 'Statecraft and Intelligence Analysis in the *Kautilīya Arthaśāstra*' has now filled this gap. According to him, the KA is relevant for the history of ideas of the political science sub-discipline, intelligence studies in contemporary times.

What was the discourse on the army in ancient India? And what is the continuity? Answers to these questions demand a deep study of the *Arthashastra*. Unlike Sun Tzu's *Art of War* or Clausewitz's *On War*, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* provides answers to troop composition, employment and morale. Chapter 4 by Pradeep Kumar Gautam titled 'The Army Then and Now' uses the text to show and compare these aspects.

The concept of strategic culture has become popular in the field of strategic studies. Chapter 5 by Rashed Uz Zaman, 'Strategic Culture in South Asia: Kautilyan Sempiternity', in Part II, looks at the relevance of strategic culture in the context of South Asia and the influence of Kautilya's

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*Arthashastra* upon South Asia; and attempts to answer what role, if any, Kautilya has for strategic culture.

Are the principles of *Arthashastra* universal? Do they matter irrespective of time and place? These questions become pertinent, given that Kautilyan principles took roots more than two millennia ago, when the nature of polities were small, monarchy was prevalent, and one was oblivious to the ‘meanings’ of certain central terms such as state, sovereignty, power, order, rights, etc. An effort is made to invoke the relevance of the Kautilyan principles to the broader discipline of bargaining and negotiation analysis in Chapter 6 by Medha Bisht titled, ‘Bargaining and Negotiation Analysis: Lessons from *Arthashastra*’.

Indian International Relations (IR) studies is not about a *history* but many histories. Theories would seek patterns in state behaviour, diplomatic practices and role of ethics in statecraft or lack thereof. But in doing so, it is vital to contextualise theoreticians, philosophers and strategists within the times they lived and wrote in. Chapter 7 by Jayashree Vivekanandan, ‘Does Indian IR have a History? Mapping Articulations of Justice and Stability in the *Arthashastra* and *Akhlaq Traditions*’ attempts a comparison between two traditions that dominated the ancient and medieval periods in India and their divergent interpretations of the notions of justice and social order—*arthashastra* tradition and *akhlaq* tradition of the medieval period.

Finally, the concluding Chapter 8 by Balbir Singh Sihag titled ‘Kautilya on Far-sight, Foresight and Freedom’ demonstrates issues of ethics. The chapter provides a refreshing and apt interpretation of a people centric approach, comprehensive approach to national security and far-sightedness in treaty making and foresight in the prevention of calamities.

There is a need for a wider and deeper study of the text and its interpretation. We hope that our effort to assemble, in a limited way, these essays and papers by an international group of scholars of repute with multidisciplinary backgrounds will generate a new interest of scholarship in India and the world. We thank the scholars and the ICSSR for supporting this work.



## About the Contributors

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1. Amb. Shivshankar Menon was the National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India from 2010-2014 and Foreign Secretary of India from 2006 to 2009. He has served as Ambassador and High Commissioner to Israel, Sri Lanka, China and Pakistan. He was also seconded to the Department of Atomic Energy in the early eighties and was a member of the Atomic Energy Commission from 2008-14. His professional experience was concentrated on India's neighbours, atomic energy and disarmament, and India's relations with the major powers. Menon speaks Chinese and some German. He has an M.A. degree in History with specialisation in Ancient India.
2. Dr. Arvind Gupta is the Deputy National Security Adviser at the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India. Earlier, he was the Director General of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) from 2012-14 and held the Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair on National Security at the IDSA (2008-12). He retired from the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) after serving in the Ministry of External Affairs and Missions abroad in different capacities. He has attended a number of security conferences in India and abroad and written extensively on diplomatic and security issues.
3. Prof. Patrick Olivelle is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Asian Studies, University of Texas. He was the Chair of the Department (1994-2007) and the recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship; and was elected President of the American Oriental Society in 2005. His books have won awards from the American

Academy of Religion and the Association of Asian Studies. In 2011 he was awarded the Career Research Excellence Award of the University of Texas, at Austin. He has published over 25 books and over 50 scholarly articles. His recent books include: *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India, Reimagining Aśoka, Viṣṇu's Code of Law, The Life of the Buddha, and Manu's Code of Law.*

4. Dr. Mark McClish is an Assistant Professor of Religion, Department of Religious Studies, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern University. He specialises in classical Hinduism, with a focus on early legal and political literature (*dharmasāstra* and *arthaśāstra*). He holds a B.A. in Religious Studies from Indiana University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin in Asian Cultures and Languages with a specialisation in Sanskrit and Indian Religions. Along with Patrick Olivelle, Dr. McClish has written a reader entitled: *The Arthaśāstra: Selections from the Classic Indian Work on Statecraft.*
5. Dr. Michael Liebig is a Fellow, South Asia Institute (SAI), Heidelberg University and a Lecturer as SAI's Department of Political Science. His research focus is pre-modern political thought in South Asia and its relevance for contemporary India's politico-strategic culture. Before joining SAI, he worked as journalist. His publications include *The Intelligence Dimension of Kautilyan Statecraft and its Implications.* He is currently engaged in research on the *Arthashastra* as a foundational text of political theory, theorised statecraft and Intelligence Studies.
6. Col. Pradeep Kumar Gautam (Retd.) is Research Fellow at IDSA, New Delhi and convener of the seminar. He has a number of books, edited chapters and articles on non-traditional security, Tibet and military matters. Presently, he is working on IDSA project on indigenous historical knowledge (Kautilya's *Arthashastra*) and is the convener of ICSSR sponsored national and international seminar on Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. His work related to this field include a number of articles and two monographs on Kautilya.

7. Dr. Rashed Uz Zaman is a Professor in the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has been teaching there since 1998. He holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in International Relations from the University of Dhaka. He also obtained a master's in Security Studies from the University of Hull, and a Ph.D. in Strategic Studies from the University of Reading, United Kingdom. In 2009-11, Dr. Zaman was an Alexander von Humboldt post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Erfurt, Germany. He was a Fulbright Visiting Professor in the Department of Political Science at Vanderbilt University, US, in 2012. He has published widely in national and international publications on issues pertaining to UN peacekeeping and strategic studies. His essay titled 'Kautilya and Strategy' has been published in Selin H. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*.
8. Dr. Medha Bisht is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, South Asian University (SAU), New Delhi. Before joining SAU, she was Associate Fellow at IDSA, with the South Asia Cluster. She studied International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University and holds a doctorate from the Diplomatic and Disarmament Studies Division, JNU, New Delhi. She has widely published and presented papers at national and international fora. Some of her publications include: *Assessing Bhutan Elections: Some Facts, Some Assumptions* (coauthored) in *Economic and Political Weekly*; and a monograph titled *Water issues in Pakistan: Policy, Practice, Management*.
9. Dr. Jayashree Vivekanandan is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi. She holds a master degree in political science and a doctorate in international politics from the Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is the author of *Interrogating International Relations: India's Strategic Practice and the Return of History*.
10. Dr. Balbir Singh Sihag, Ph.D., M.I.T., is a Professor Emeritus of Economics, University of Massachusetts Lowell. He is the author of *Kautilya: The True Founder of Economics*; and more than 20 articles on Kautilya's various contributions.

11. Dr. Saurabh Mishra is a Research Assistant at IDSA, New Delhi. He has his doctorate from Banaras Hindu University; and is associated with the *Indigenous Historical Knowledge* project since its inception. He is also a part of the IDSA-University of Heidelberg-ISAS, National University of Singapore collaborative project on Kautilya as contributor and co-editor.

# Welcome Address by Dr. Arvind Gupta, DG, IDSA

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April 9, 2014

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to the National Security Advisor Shri Shivshankar Menon for inaugurating the International Seminar on “Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*” being organised at the IDSA today. I would, particularly, like to thank the foreign delegates who are participating in today’s seminar.

Since we began the project in October 2012, we have had three planned events. Two monographs have been published and two edited books are under publication. At the IDSA library we have built one of the finest reference desks on the *Arthashastra*. We have also started introducing the *Arthashastra* in the few training courses that we organise including those for IFS probationers.

The South Asian Institute (SAI), Heidelberg University, Germany has expressed interest in collaborating with the IDSA on further explorations of the relevance of the *Arthashastra* for modern political science. We do hope that the government will provide some support for this collaboration to go ahead. One of the major gains of this project has been the identification of resource persons, whether in India or outside, who are dedicated to the study of the *Arthashastra*. Our website lists over two dozen resource persons.

While the vast treatises of the *Arthashastra* have yet to be explored fully for their relevance to modern theories of international relations,

security, etc., we have in the last two years discovered that some of the concepts contained in the *Arthashastra* are worth investigation. In the field of foreign policy, Kautilya's *mandala* theory stands out as a nuanced exposition of alliances. The six attributes of foreign policy—*shadgunya*—provide a sound conceptual basis for a country's foreign policy. The four *upayas* of *sama*, *dana*, *bheda* and *danda* remain relevant as instruments of state policy even today. The *Arthashastra* is a veritable manual for intelligence operatives and soldiers. The art of spying mentioned in the *Arthashastra* is extremely interesting even today.

The researchers should also look at concepts such as *matsya-nyaya* and *saptanga*, which are worth exploration in the context of inter-state relations.

In order to judge the relevance of the *Arthashastra*, it is important that scholars should undertake comparative research comparing the precepts mentioned in the *Arthashastra* with those in the comparable non-Indian texts like that of Sun Tzu. Some work has been done in the IDSA in the past in the area but this can be deepened. It is also necessary to develop an authoritative dictionary of the concepts of statecraft mentioned in the *Arthashastra* which can be referred to by students.

The *Arthashastra* is only one element of India's vast tradition of strategic thought. Undoubtedly, other texts should be studied as well. However, for the time being we will try and keep the focus on the *Arthashastra* so that a critical volume of research is generated through the project.

# Keynote Address by Shri Shivshankar Menon, National Security Adviser

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April 9, 2014

Thank you for asking me to speak to your seminar on the *Arthashastra*. I must congratulate Dr. Gupta and the IDSA on your sustained Kautilya initiative which has really gained strength in three years. You have prompted scholars in India to undertake fresh and valuable research on Kautilya and the *Arthashastra*, and have also put us in touch with scholars on these subjects from across the world.

What you have achieved through these seminars and conferences on Kautilya is important and relevant to a practitioner like me for two reasons:

In the first place, Kautilya offers distilled experience of living and operating in a multi-state system which long predates and is an alternative to the Westphalian state system and, our (historically speaking) rather limited experience of its operation in the last few centuries. In fact, Kautilya is probably more relevant to what we face today in at least one respect. The Westphalian system is based on an idealised and immaculate sovereignty. The *Magadhan* or Indian state system of the 3rd century BC was not. In our modern world, technology has made state boundaries porous. By placing power in the hands of individuals and small groups, technology has broken the monopoly of violence of the state. In these respects the modern state is probably closer to what Kautilya describes than to the Westphalian ideal. It is, therefore, relevant and useful to see how the *Arthashastra* deals with these issues.

We are in a world where power is more evenly distributed than in the Cold War, a world tending to multi-polarity, like the one that Kautilya knew, within which he worked to maximise the power of his king/state. It would be interesting to work on the Kautilyan approach to coping with a multi-polar world, work which would be at the intersection of both political science and Mauryan history to the extent that we know it.

The other aspect that I find fascinating on rereading Kautilya is his reminder of the higher purpose of the state. The common impression of the *Arthashastra* is that this is a Machiavellian text. And yet, this is not a text for the glorification of the state or the prince. Certainly, it aims at consolidating and exercising the power of the king/state. But it constantly reminds us that the *dharma* of the King is to benefit his subjects and the state, not himself. And the choice of policy instruments, whether *sama*, *dana*, *bheda* or *danda*, depends on which serves that higher purpose and not on the individual preference or whim of the King. This is not a text on the divine right of Kings or Mandate of Heaven. Instead, it is a text on how to achieve noble goals in an ignoble world, to achieve political and social progress in an unstable and unpredictable environment. Here again, Kautilya is remarkably modern in his ideas and has considerable contemporary resonance. (That Kautilya managed to establish the Mauryan Empire, shows the efficacy of what he prescribes.)

Indeed, the dilemma of the modern state is how to reconcile its two faces. One face is the poetic or political imagination of nationalism that inspires its people to believe in and die for it. The other face is the prosaic one of bureaucratic rationality from which people expect good governance and the delivery of services, the telephone company face for which no one will lay down his life. In other words, there is, in modern statecraft, a binary opposition between *dharma* and *artha*, between norm and purpose, or between aspiration and instrumentality. Studying Kautilya and Mauryan history shows us that this binary is not just a modern phenomenon.

Thanks to your efforts and those of several scholars around the world we may be at another “Kautilyan moment”. The last was when the national movement drew reassurance of Indian statecraft from the *Arthashastra* in the early twentieth century, seeking to establish an independent and realist tradition of our own in the collision between Indian nationalism and

Imperial historiography. The *Arthashastra* itself emerged from the collision of India's 6th century BC Enlightenment (Upanishads, Buddhism, reason) and the power politics of the *Magadhan* and North Indian state system in subsequent centuries. Both were worlds in rapid change. We seem to be at an analogous historical moment again.

So, let me once again wish you well and hope that this series of conferences on the *Arthashastra* and Kautilya organised by the IDSA goes from strength to strength.



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PART I

REVISITING CONCEPTS, ISSUES  
FROM TEXT

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# 1

## Economy, Ecology, and National Defence in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*

*Patrick Olivelle*

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When Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (*AŚ*) was discovered in Mysore around 1905, a scholar gave this assessment of its significance: "(It) is the most precious work in the whole range of Sanskrit literature."<sup>1</sup> I think this assessment still holds true. The *Arthaśāstra* offers a unique lens into not only ancient Indian political formations, governance, and law, but also culture and society more generally. Given the particular interests of the audience today, I will limit myself to two areas: (1) the impact of economic growth on ecological management, and (2) the centrality of economic strength in national defence and territorial expansion, and some of the unique strategies Kauṭilya espoused in this regard.<sup>2</sup>

### **PART ONE**

Although Kauṭilya did not have any effective way of measuring the GDP or the gross wealth of a kingdom, he did know that the wealth deposited in the treasury was closely related to the national wealth. Only a rich country can yield a rich treasury. As far as the king was concerned, the treasury (*kośa*) was the most important measure of his power and prestige. Kauṭilya states

this clearly, unambiguously, and succinctly: *kośapūrvāḥsarvārambhāḥ*—literally, “All undertakings are preceded by the treasury.”<sup>3</sup> That is, the treasury is the source of all successful operations, whether economic or military. The armed forces, in a special way, are totally depended on a robust treasury: *kośamūlo hi daṇḍaḥ* —“The army is, indeed, rooted in the treasury.”<sup>4</sup> This is something that today’s military policy-makers around the world, I am sure, are well aware of: the strength of the economy, we hear it said often, is a national security issue. Kautilya was eloquent on these twin pillars of the state, treasury and army: “The army is born from the treasury, and the earth adorned by the treasury is obtained through the treasury and the army.”<sup>5</sup> These two are essential for domestic and foreign policy success.

A central question for the Kautilyan king, then, is how to increase the treasury, how to make the national economy robust thus enhancing the revenue stream to the state. Now, something that may be difficult for us in the 21st century to understand or appreciate is that the Kautilyan king did not simply rule his kingdom, he also owned it. The remark ascribed to Louis XIV of France: “L’État, c’est moi” — “I am the state”—applied also to him. The king, furthermore, was not only a ruler but also a businessman. The Kautilyan state was what we would call today a mixed economy, with the state sometimes entering directly into many areas of wealth production, often as state monopolies as in the case mines and salt production, and always taxing the private wealth producers. The Kautilyan king was not exceptional in this regard; most ancient and medieval kings around the world behaved this way. There was no clear distinction between the wealth of the state as an institution and the wealth of the king as a private individual.

In Kautilyan thought, there were basically four kinds of economic activities, both private and public, that were sources of income to the state: (1) agriculture and animal husbandry; (2) natural resources, including forests and mines; (3) manufacturing; and (4) trade.<sup>6</sup> One focus of my paper being ecology, I will concentrate on the first two types of activities.

Without doubt, the backbone of the Kautilyan economy was agriculture and animal husbandry, both of which were managed by an *adhyakṣa* or superintendent. The various *adhyakṣas*—35 are listed in the text—constituted the main bureaucratic infrastructure of the Kautilyan state

overseeing numerous public and private activities from forests and elephants to mining, gold, liquor, and prostitutes. The *Arthaśāstra* has an entire chapter<sup>7</sup> on the superintendent of agriculture (*sītādhyakṣa*) and another on the superintendent of cattle (*go'dhyakṣa*).<sup>8</sup> The state-owned agricultural land was often called *sītā* and the superintendents administered those lands and animal herds as sources of income to the state. These superintendents also had regulatory responsibilities with respect to private agriculture and animal husbandry within the country. It is in the context of the management of agricultural land and activities that we find significant information about land and water usage.

Kauṭilya's aim was to address within the confines of his treatise all issues relating to the establishment and running of a state and state institutions and infrastructure. For this, he adopted a simple strategy: imagine that you are constructing a kingdom *ex novo*, completely from nothing. This, of course, hardly ever happens in reality; for the most part, a kingdom is inherited by a son from his father, along with its economic, bureaucratic, and physical infrastructure. But the strategy permitted Kauṭilya to describe everything, from the building of forts and cities, to the establishment of agricultural land, irrigation, forest preserves, trade routes, navigation, mines, and factories, as well as the state and judicial bureaucracy and the military.

So we have in the very first chapter of the central Book II, the settlement of the countryside by agriculturalists. Land, which is cleared for cultivation as well as which is not cleared, is distributed to settlers. Those who do not actually put the land they receive under cultivation have it confiscated and given to others.<sup>9</sup>

He should settle villages with mostly Śūdra agriculturalists, each village consisting of a minimum of 100 families and a maximum of 500 families, with boundaries extending one or two Krośa, and affording mutual protection. He should make the junctures of their boundaries demarcated by a river, a hill, a forest, a band of pebbles, a cave, a dike, a Śamī tree, a Śālmālī tree, or a milk-tree. In the middle of an 800-village unit he should establish a provincial capital (*sthānīya*), in the middle of a 400-village unit a district municipality (*droṇamukha*), in the middle of a 200-village unit a county seat

(*kārvaṭika*), and a collection centre (*saṃgrahaṇa*) for each collection of ten villages. At the frontiers he should construct the forts of the Frontier Commanders (*antapāla*) as gateways into the countryside (*janapada*) and under the control of the Frontier Commanders. Areas between them should be guarded by trappers, tribals, mountaineers, Caṇḍālas, and forest dwellers.<sup>10</sup>

A major concern of farmers then as now is an adequate and timely supply of water. Kautilya talks about two kinds of agricultural land: one that depended on rain and the other that was irrigated called *adevamātrika*, because it did not depend on the gods for timely rain. The state took a personal interest in establishing irrigation works, called *setubandha*, both for its own land and for private properties. Various incentives were provided to private individuals to construct lakes, reservoirs, and water channels. These appear not to be large-scale irrigation project like the ones we find in the north-central region of Sri Lanka but smaller ones to serve a limited number of farmers:

He should get reservoirs constructed, reservoirs that are fed either with naturally occurring water or with water channelled from elsewhere; or he should render assistance to others constructing them by giving land, routes, trees, and implements, as also to those constructing holy places and parks. When someone quits a joint project to build a reservoir, his workmen and bullocks should carry out the work; and he has to pay his share of the expenses, but he will not receive a share of the returns. The ownership of fish, waterfowl, and commercial vegetables in the reservoirs belongs to the king.<sup>11</sup>

Kautilya is careful to note the various rates of rainfall in different parts of India, especially in regions such as Avanti and Aśmaka, broadly the region where Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra meet, where specific amounts are noted and where Kautilya probably lived:<sup>12</sup>

The amount of rainfall in dry regions is sixteen Droṇas<sup>13</sup> and in wet regions, one and a half times that—regions where sowing is carried out according to the zone. The amount of rainfall in the Aśmaka region<sup>14</sup> is thirteen and a half Droṇas; in the Avanti region [modern Madhya Pradesh], twenty-three Droṇas; and in the Aparānta region [coastal regions of Maharashtra], as also in the snowy regions, an

unlimited amount—unlimited in terms of time also in lands where sowing is carried out with irrigation.<sup>15</sup>

The kinds of crop planted depend on the amount of water available:

He should plant a wet crop, a winter crop, or a summer crop according to the amount of irrigation water available.<sup>16</sup>

He should sow either crops that require a lot of water or grains that require little water. Śāli-rice, Vrihi-rice, Kodrava-grain, sesame, panic grain, Udāraka, and Varaka are the first to be sowed. Mudga-bean, Māca-bean, and Śaimbya are to be sowed in the middle period. Safflower, Masūra-lentil, Kulattha, barley, wheat, Kalāya, linseed, and mustard are the last to be sowed.<sup>17</sup>

During times of famine, the king is instructed to employ people in various public works projects, especially those involving irrigation.<sup>18</sup>

The other significant aspect of Kauṭilya's care for the land is the establishment of what we would today refer to as nature preserves called *vana*. Four kinds of such preserves are noted by Kauṭilya: elephant preserves (*hastivana*), game preserves (*mṛgavana*), preserves for extracting forest produce (*kupyavana*), and protected sanctuaries where it is forbidden to kill animals and birds (*abhayavana*). Now, it is clear that the first three kinds of forest preserves had economic and military objectives, in addition to any other motives Kauṭilya may have had in promoting them, including ecological. Whatever the objectives, these lands left in their natural condition provided forest cover over a large percentage of a kingdom, clearly enhancing the ecological sustainability of the state.

Elephants were a mainstay of the classical Indian army, which consisted of four divisions (*caturanga*): elephant and chariot corps, cavalry, and infantry. Kauṭilya urges the state to ensure a steady supply of elephants. Now, it is clear that not all the small states of ancient India would have had forests capable of sustaining an elephant population. As I have noted, though, Kauṭilya addresses not concrete states but the ideal state, and in that context one of the concerns is ensuring a steady supply of elephants and not having to depend on the marketplace or neighbouring rulers, who could choke off this essential military supply. The Superintendent of Elephants (*hastyadhyakṣa*) was responsible both for the establishment and

protection of elephant forests, and for the maintenance of domesticated elephants:

At the frontier he [Superintendent of Elephants] should establish an elephant-forest guarded by foresters (*aṭavī*). The Superintendent of Elephant-forests (*nāgavanādhyakṣa*) should protect elephant-forests located near hills, rivers, lakes, or marshy land, with the help of elephant-forest wardens (*nāgavanapāla*), keeping the boundaries, entrances, and exits under surveillance. They should put to death anyone who kills an elephant. . . . The elephant-forest wardens, assisted by elephant keepers, foot-chainers, border guards, foresters, and attendants<sup>19</sup>—their body odors masked by rubbing elephant urine and dung, camouflaged with branches of *Bhallātakī*-tree,<sup>20</sup> and moving about with five or seven female elephants acting as lures—should find out the size of the elephant herds by means of clues provided by where they sleep, their footprints and dung, and the damage they have done to river banks. They should keep a written record of elephants—those moving in herds, those roaming alone, those driven from a herd, and the leaders of herds, as well as those that are vicious or in rut, the cubs, and those released from captivity.<sup>21</sup>

The game reserve was used for the royal hunt:

He should get an animal reserve of the same extent established for the king's relaxation—a reserve with a single gate, protected by a moat, and containing shrubs and bushes bearing tasty fruit, trees without thorns, shallow ponds, tame deer and other game, vicious animals with their claws and fangs removed, and male and female elephants and elephant cubs for use in the hunt.<sup>22</sup>

Then there were forests for extracting forest produce, which included timber, fruits, and medical plants:

He should also establish a forest for each product classified as forest produce, as well as factories attached to the produce-forests and foresters living in the produce-forests.<sup>23</sup>

These produce forests, as well as the factories attached to them, were under the supervision of the Superintendent of Produce-Forests (*kupyavanādhyakṣa*), and the entire chapter 17 of Book II is devoted to his activities. He is to

punish anyone cutting down trees in these forests. We get here a long and detailed list of forest produce extracted from these forests, including hardwoods, reeds, vines, fibrous plants, poisons, and animal products such as skins. Near the produce forests were located animal sanctuaries (*abhayavana*):

At its border [that is, the border of the game reserve] or as dictated by the lay of the land, he should get another animal reserve established where all the animals are treated as guests (*sarvātithimṛga*).<sup>24</sup>

This is the only preserve that would be equivalent to a modern animal sanctuary or nature preserve. Interestingly, it is the Superintendent of Abattoirs, what we would call today the meat industry, who is called upon to make sure that butchers do not kill animals from these preserves. It is likely that at least some of the meat sold in ancient Indian markets came from hunting wild game. Kauṭilya says:

The Superintendent of Abattoirs should impose the highest fine for tying up, killing, or injuring deer, game animals, birds, or fish that are legally protected from harm and that are living in sanctuaries.<sup>25</sup>

The animals from the sanctuaries are also protected when they wander out into cultivated fields. They should be driven back without causing them injury:

One should take care to avoid causing injury. When animals from forest sanctuaries or those in preserves are grazing, the owner should be informed and the animals should be driven away in such a way as not to cause them injury.<sup>26</sup>

There is also an interesting provision with regard to animals and birds intended for slaughter. The Superintendent of Abattoirs is required to tax the butchers a certain number of these animals, at least some of which are then released into the sanctuary:

In the case of creatures whose killing is recognised and who are not in preserves, he should collect one-sixth share, as also an additional one-tenth share in the case of fish and birds and an additional duty in the case of deer and game animals. In the case of birds and deer that are alive, he should release one-sixth into sanctuaries.<sup>27</sup>

## PART TWO

As I have stated at the outset, Kauṭilya's king was both ruler and businessman. His state was both a country to be ruled, governed, and kept safe for its inhabitants, and a source of wealth and a springboard for foreign conquests, conquests that were intended not simply and not primarily to expand his territory but especially to extract wealth. In this sense, the expansionary policies of the Kauṭilyan kingdom were similar to those of other ancient kings.

In his theorising about foreign conquest, Kauṭilya is anchored firmly in the old idea of the king as *vijigīṣu* (one desiring to conquer), a technical term meaning a ruler desiring and firmly committed to conquests. In fact, Kauṭilya often refers to his king as simply *vijigīṣu*. He could not envisage a king who would simply be satisfied to remain within his own home territory; it would have been seen as the contradiction of the very notion of kingship.

According to Kauṭilya, there were basically two ways to accomplish the goals of a *vijigīṣu*: diplomacy and war, each of which, of course, is complex. Kauṭilya, for example, talks about many kinds of warfare, such as open and clandestine. But my focus here is on diplomacy, which is an even more complex process than war. I want to discuss here in a special way one diplomatic strategy that is useful not only in undermining foreign kings but also in dealing with internal threats. The term Kauṭilya uses—and it is indeed a favourite of his—is the verb *atisaṃdhatte* and its nominal counterpart *atisaṃdhāna*, and less frequently *atisaṃdhi*.<sup>28</sup> These terms are used a total of 64 times by Kauṭilya. The strategy of *atisaṃdhāna* is, I am sure, familiar to today's diplomats and intelligence personnel. It consists of making compacts or agreements with others, and using those very agreements to outwit and overpower potential partners. Now, the simple form of this term, *saṃdhi*, is very well-known in ancient political science. It forms the very first member of the six-fold strategy known as *ṣāḍguṇya* and consists of making a compact or alliance with another ruler in order to jointly accomplish an objective, such as attacking a third ruler. But, if you followed Kauṭilya's instructions, you would use this alliance as an opportunity not just to defeat the common enemy but also in the process

to undermine or defeat your ally as well, thus killing two birds with one stone. This is part of the “war of wits” (*mantrayuddha*) to which Kauṭilya devotes an entire section of Book XII. The addition of *ati*, meaning “beyond” and having the sense of transgression, produces a compound that has the meaning of a pact that contains the elements that undermine the pact itself.

Here are a couple of examples of *atisaṃdhāna*, the outwitting of an opponent, by entering into a pact (*saṃdhi*) with stipulations with regard to the territory along which their armies will march, or the times when they will do so. Here “enemy” refers actually to the ally with whom Kauṭilya's *vijigīṣu* has entered into a pact.

If he were to think: “My enemy will march into a region containing hill, forest, and river forts; separated by a forest; cut off from grains, men, supplies, and reinforcements; bereft of green fodder, firewood, and water; a region that is unfamiliar, distant, with a hostile population, or without land suitable for military operations. I will march into a region with the opposite characteristics;” in this sort of a situation, he should enter into a peace pact with a stipulation relating to region.<sup>29</sup>

Alternatively, if he were to think:

“My enemy will operate during a time when there is excessive rain, heat, or cold; when diseases are prevalent; when food and amenities are scarce; when there are obstacles for military operations; a time that is too short or too long for accomplishing the task. I will operate during a time with the opposite characteristics;” in this sort of a situation, he should enter into a peace pact with a stipulation relating to time.<sup>30</sup>

Such a pact will cause the downfall of the party with whom the *vijigīṣu* makes the pact in the very process of carrying out the stipulations of the pact! The use of such outwitting against powerful people within the king's own territory, against whom it is difficult for the king to act openly and directly, is called “secret punishment” (*upāṃśudaṇḍa*).<sup>31</sup> This strategy shows that a king was not a tyrant who would or could act as he pleased; he had to negotiate various power centres within his kingdom. He has to eliminate such individuals without leaving his fingerprints, without allowing

people to point to finger at him. Here are two examples of secret punishment against a powerful man suspected of being a traitor:

Alternatively, a secret agent should instigate the conceited son of a traitorous high official, saying:

“You are the king’s son. You have been placed here out of fear of the enemy.” Once he is convinced, the king should pay him honor in secret, saying: “You have reached the age for becoming the Crown Prince, but I am not anointing you out of fear of the high official.” The secret agent should prod him to kill the high official. When he has carried out the attack, he should have him executed on the spot, proclaiming: “This man is a parricide!”<sup>32</sup>

Using the same strategy, the king can kill two birds with one stone when he finds two traitorous people in high positions. With regard to the suppression of two traitors, however—he should dispatch a person who is himself a traitor along with a weak army that includes assassins to the place where there is a traitor who needs to be suppressed, saying:

“Go and in that fort—*or*, province—raise a military force—*or*, money—; *or*, seize money from the favourite; *or*, abduct the favourite’s daughter by force; *or*, carry out any one of these tasks: building a fort, undertaking an irrigation project, making a trade route, settling a vacant land, starting a pit-mine, and establishing a produce—or elephant-forest; *or*, function as a Commander of a province or a Frontier Commander. Imprison anyone who may oppose you or refuses to render assistance to you.” In like manner, he should notify other officers: “You must oppose the misbehaviour of this man.” While he is arguing during these incidents of altercation or interference with his tasks, assassins<sup>33</sup> should hurl their weapons and kill him stealthily. The others should be punished for this crime.<sup>34</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Kautilya addresses the manifold interests of the king whom he is advising, and I have merely noted a few that are of interest to the theme of this paper. Uppermost among these strategies to make his king successful is to make him rich; without a large *kośa* or treasury no ambition of the king can be

attained. But in an interesting way, we see that Kauṭilya is aware of the fact that becoming rich involves both keeping his subjects content and loyal and looking after the land, what we nowadays would call ecological concerns. But a rich king is not necessarily a successful king; success transcends wealth. Success in terms of consolidating and expanding one's power depends largely on the policy and strategy, and Kauṭilya spends a lot of time in instructing the king about developing proper policies and strategies, both internal and external. I have only scratched the surface. A closer examination of this remarkable book will throw considerable light not only on the politics but also on the society and economy of ancient India.

### NOTES

1. *Cambridge History of India* (Volume I), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1922, p. 467.
2. There has been and is an ongoing controversy about the date of composition of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*. I have attempted (Olivelle 2013) to demonstrate that the text, far from being a Maurya document (McClish 2012), was composed initially in the middle of the 1st century CE. It was then subjected to a substantial redaction sometime after the middle of the 2nd century CE. See Mark McClish and Patrick Olivelle, *The Arthaśāstra Selections from the Classic Indian Work on Statecraft*, Hackett Publishing, Cambridge, 2012.
3. Patrick Olivelle, *King Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra* (A New Annotated Translation), Oxford University Press, New York, 2013, p. 114, [2.8.1].
4. *Ibid.*, p. 332, [8.1.47].
5. *Ibid.*, p. 129, [2.12.37].
6. For further discussion of trade and manufacturing sectors, see Trautmann 2012 and my forthcoming article "Long-Distance Trade in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*", in Osmund Bopearachchi and Sanjyot Mehendale (eds.), *Maritime Trade and Cultural Exchanges in the Indian Ocean*, Turnhout, Belgium, Brepols.
7. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, pp. 152-154, [2.24].
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165, [2.29].
9. *Ibid.*, p. 100, [2.1.8-12].
10. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 99, [2.1.2-6].  
A Krośa is approximately 3.6 km. The Śamī is either *Mimosa Suma* (Hindi: *chikkur*), a thorny shrub, or *Prosopis Spicigera*. The Śālmālī is the red silk-cotton tree: *Bombax Ceiba*.
11. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 100, [2.1.20-24].
12. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
13. A Droṇa as a measurement of capacity was approximately 5 litres. How this was

- translated into a measurement of rainfall is unclear. Kangle (1972, 149), calculating from one Droṇa being 511 cubic inches, gives the rainfall for dry regions (16 Droṇas) as 32 inches (81.28 cm) if the rain gauge is cylindrical and 25 inches (63.5 cm) if the mouth is square. This is calculated on the basis of a rain gauge with an 18-inch (one Aratni) diameter: see AŚ 2.5.7, where this dimension of a rain gauge is given. Since the rain gauge there is called *kuṇḍa* (pot or urn), it is unlikely that the gauge was square. According to Balkundi (1998), on the other hand, the gauge was about 38 cm wide and 13 cm deep. When the gauge was full it would contain one Āḍhaka of water. He calculates a rainfall of 83.2 cm for Aśmaka and 147.2 cm for Avanti.
14. The commentator Bhaṭṭasvāmin identifies this region as Mahārāṣṭra, while Wojtilla (2005, 417) identifies it as the modern Marathwada, and Balkundi (1998) as northern inland Mahārāṣṭra. See: H.V. Balkundi, "Measurement of Rainfall in Ancient India", in *Asian Agri-History*, No. 2, Asian Agri-History Foundation, 1998, pp. 37-48; Wojtilla Gyula, "The *Sītādhyakṣprakarāṇa* of the *Arthaśāstra*", in Lars Gohler (ed.), *Indische Kultur im Kontext: Rituale, Texte und Ideenaus Indien und der Welt*, Festschrift für Klaus Mylius, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, p. 417.
15. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 152, [2.24.5].
16. *Ibid.*, p. 153, [2.24.19].
17. *Ibid.*, [2.24.11-14].
- Śāli is called by commentators a red winter rice. Vrihi is a long-grained rice said to ripen in 60 days. Kodrava is the Kodo millet, and Udāraka is also probably a variety of millet. See: Wojtilla Gyula, "Glossary: A Collection of Words Pertaining to Sanskrit Agricultural Vocabulary", in *Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica*, 31, Acta Universitatis Szegediensis, Szeged, Hungary, 2011, p. 8.
- Varaka is an inferior grain identified as wild gram or Jangali Mung (*Phaseolustrilobus*). Mugda is green gram (*Vignaradiata*), and Māca is the common Mung bean (*Phaseolusradiatus*). Śaimbya is probably a generic name to refer to legumes (*śimba*). Masūra is the lentil *Ervum lens* or *Ervumhirsutum*. Kulattha is the so-called Horse gram (*Dolichosbiflorus* or *uniflorus*). Kalāya is the yellow pea or yellow vetch (*Lathyrusaphaca*).
18. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 229, [4.3.17].
19. Here we have a list of technical terms for persons involved in the elephant industry: *nāgavanapāla*, *hastipaka*, *pādapāśika*, *saimika*, *vanacara*, and *pārikarmika*. Elsewhere Kautilya refers to specialists in caring for domesticated elephants: "The retinue of attendants consists of veterinarian (*cikitsaka*), trainer (*anikastha*), mahout (*ārohaka*), groom (*ādhorāṇa*), guard (*hastipaka*), decorator (*aupaçārika*), cook (*vidhāpācaka*), feeder (*yāvasika*), foot restrainer (*pādapāśika*), stall guard (*kuṭirakṣaka*), sleep attendant (*aupaśāyika*), and the like." See: Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 170, [2.32.16].
20. Probably, the reference is either to the marking nut or oriental cashew (*Semecarpus Anacardium*) or to the black varnish tree (Hindi: Halgery, *Holigarna Arnottiana*).
21. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 102, [2.2.6-11].
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102, [2.2.3].
23. *Ibid.*, p. 102, [2.2.5].

24. *Ibid.*, [2.2.4].
25. *Ibid.*, p. 157, [2.26.1].
26. *Ibid.*, p. 200, [3.10.30-31].
27. *Ibid.*, p. 157, [2.26.4].
28. I refer the reader to a more detailed study of this concept that I have already published. See: Patrick Olivelle, "War and Peace: Semantics of *saṃdhi* and *vigraha* in the *Arthaśāstra*", in Bertil Tikkanen and Albion M. Butters (eds.), *Pūrvāparaprajñābhinandanam: Indological and Other Essays in Honour of Klaus Karttunen*, Studia Orientalia 110, Societas Orientalis Fennica, Helsinki, 2011, pp. 131-139.
29. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 293, [7.6.8].
30. *Ibid.*, [7.6.9].
31. The verb *atisaṃdadhyāt* is used with regard to outwitting domestic opponents at AŚ 5.1.35. See: Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 255.
32. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, p. 254, [5.1.15-18].
33. These are a special category of secret agents bearing the name *ūkṣṇa* (ferocious, vicious). These agents were employed especially to carry out assassinations.
34. Patrick Olivelle, note 3, pp. 255-256, [5.1.38-42].

# 2

## Non-Aggression Pacts and Strategic Partnerships in Kauṭilyan Foreign Policy

*Mark McClish*

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### **Introduction**

Given its complexity, any topical study of the *Arthaśāstra* (KAŚ) is also necessarily an argument about how we should read it. Contemporary audiences tend to expect of Kauṭilya's masterwork coherent perspectives on various topics, but I would argue that this is often an error. We have, first of all, to account for the text's own complex history: at root it is a compendium of other works on statecraft,<sup>1</sup> which has resulted in the aggregation of frequently heterogeneous perspectives on single issues. More importantly, perhaps, we have also to account for Kauṭilya's method, which prefers to discuss strategy in specific, limited contexts rather than through the application of broad, theoretical axioms. This 'bottom-up' approach accommodates divergent understandings of specific concepts without requiring general homogeneity or strict coherence throughout the text as a whole. Rather than assuming that Kauṭilya's perspective on a given topic is everywhere the same, therefore, topical studies must remain sensitive to local context and make arguments about how we should read the text in order to remain true to its internal diversity.

The discussion of foreign policy, found primarily in the *Arthaśāstra*'s long and difficult seventh book (*adhikaraṇa*), is no exception. Here, a focus on peace pacts—both non-aggression pacts as well as strategic partnerships—not only enhances our understanding of how Kauṭilya understood the nature, strategies, and goals of effective foreign policy, but also elucidates the structure and composition of the seventh book itself and, in turn, how it can be read to the greatest benefit. I focus here on the concept of peace pacts (*saṃdhi*) in the *Arthaśāstra*'s seventh book and what the study of them can tell us about the text itself.

## **Peace Pacts (*saṃdhi*)**

Throughout the *Arthaśāstra*, Kauṭilya concerns himself with domestic and interstate politics from the perspective of a single state, the archetype for which is the relatively small, regional kingdom called a *janapada*. The archetypal state-as-*janapada* is situated in an 'international' context that finds it encircled by 'enemy' states conceived on the same model. And, surrounding this circle of enemies is a yet larger circle of 'allies,' and beyond them circles of enemies, allies, and so forth, radiating outward concentrically. This is the well-known *maṇḍala* theory.<sup>2</sup>

The theoretical foundation of interstate relations, based on the *maṇḍala* theory, is the *ṣāḍguṇya*, which posits six fundamental postures available between the home state and its rivals: *saṃdhi* ('peace pact'), *vigraha* ('declaring war'<sup>3</sup>), *āsana* ('remaining stationary'), *yāna* ('marching into battle'), *saṃśraya* ('seeking refuge'), and *dvaidhībhāva* (the 'double stratagem', i.e. pursuing treaty and conflict simultaneously<sup>4</sup>).<sup>5</sup> The meaning of some of these terms is somewhat obscure, but I want to focus specifically on the concept of *saṃdhi* as it is used within the seventh book.

Kauṭilya introduces the *ṣāḍguṇya* in the first chapter of the seventh book<sup>6</sup> and discusses the six strategies over most of the next three chapters.<sup>7</sup> He defines *saṃdhi* only as *paṇabandha*, 'a negotiated agreement',<sup>8</sup> which could theoretically cover all types of settlements or pacts between states. Olivelle sees *saṃdhi* as "a temporary and focused contract between two parties aimed at accomplishing a specific goal, such as attacking a common enemy".<sup>9</sup> Kangle translates *paṇabandha* as 'entering into a treaty' and

glosses it ‘the framing of terms or conditions’, which covers any ‘formal treaty with specific clauses’.<sup>10</sup> In his study of the text, Kangle expands on this: “making a treaty containing conditions or terms, that is, the policy of peace.”<sup>11</sup>

I believe that we can build on the insights of these scholars by recognising that Kautilya in fact uses the word *saṃdhi* to refer to different kinds of pacts or treaties in the seventh book, and that the meaning of the term shifts between 7.4.1-17 and 7.4.18ff. A closer look at how *saṃdhi* is used in these respective sections reveals a clear distinction between what we might call non-aggression pacts, meant to forestall enemy hostilities, and strategic partnerships, centred on some kind of coordinated joint activity. The distinction between these two kinds of *saṃdhi*—and how they operate in relation to the instructions of the seventh book—has not always been sufficiently appreciated. I will first examine the use of *saṃdhi* in the early chapters.<sup>12</sup>

### **Non-Aggression Pacts (7.1.1-7.4.17)**

If we look more closely at how *saṃdhi* is conceived in the opening chapters of the seventh book, we find that Kautilya has in mind here non-aggression pacts specifically. What I am calling strategic partnerships—agreements to undertake coordinated action—do not come into the text until later. In a section he calls *guṇāvasthāpana*, ‘establishing the strategic measures’,<sup>13</sup> Kautilya tells us that *saṃdhi* should be pursued when the home state is weaker than the adversary: *parasmāddhīyamānaḥ saṃdadhīta*.<sup>14</sup> Such advice follows the general assumption, discussed in a moment, that stronger states can be expected routinely to attack weaker states.<sup>15</sup> Here at 7.1.13, then, the strategy of *saṃdhi* is clearly meant to forestall aggression by a stronger state. That Kautilya is thinking of *saṃdhi* as a non-aggression pact rather than a strategic partnership is made particularly clear by his advice for the use of *dvaiddhībhāva*: *sahāyasādhye kārye dvaiddhībhāvaṃ gacchet*.<sup>16</sup> The ‘double stratagem,’ at least as presented here, is the model for strategic partnerships, as it is to be chosen in cases where there is ‘a task achievable only with an accomplice’ and involves entering a peace pact with a second state and then jointly attacking a third state.

The logic of non-aggression pacts as a strategy depends on the assumption, operative everywhere in the first four chapters of the seventh book, that stronger states can be counted on to aggress against weaker ones. The elementary advice emerging from this assumption is given by Kauṭilya at 7.3.2:<sup>17</sup> *samajyāyobhyāṃ saṃdhīyeta hīnena vighṛhṇīyāt*, “he should enter into a peace pact with someone who is equal or stronger, whereas he should declare war against one who is weaker.” The purpose of the peace pact, at least from the perspective of the equal or weaker state pursuing it, is to defer such inevitable aggression. That *saṃdhi*, in this sense, delineates the opposite of aggression and violence is taken for granted, as when *saṃdhi* is understood as a state of affairs opposed to the actual infliction of harm:

*samaścen na saṃdhim icchet yāvanmātram apakuryāt tāvanmātram asya pratyapakuryāt*<sup>18</sup>

If an equal does not want to enter into a peace pact, he should inflict the same amount of damage on him as the latter has inflicted on him.

From the perspective of the stronger state, the peace pact is a promise of non-aggression guaranteed by the subservience of the weaker state and is only an alternative when it can achieve the same conditions of utter subordination as can be achieved by hostilities: *hīnaścet sarvatrānupraṇatas tiṣṭhet saṃdhim upeyāt*, “If someone weaker remains subservient in all matters, he should enter into a peace pact with him”.<sup>19</sup> The conditions of political domination have, in this section, two modalities: military conquest or subordination structured through such non-aggression pacts.

By definition, then, *saṃdhi*, as discussed to this point in the seventh book, is a strategy pursued by equal or weaker states to forestall inevitable aggression by stronger states. It follows from this that peace pacts between states of equal strength would have been simple non-aggression pacts, not involving conditions or coordinated activity, as implied by the discussion of peace pacts at 7.1.20-31,<sup>20</sup> 7.1.32-38,<sup>21</sup> and 7.2.1-2<sup>22</sup> (before Kauṭilya has introduced the variable of relative strength into his foreign policy calculations at 7.3.1).<sup>23</sup>

The general conception of *saṃdhi* as a kind of non-aggression treaty

rather than a strategic partnership is further underlined by Kauṭilya's reason for preferring peace pacts to open conflict. At 7.2.1-2 he tells us:

*saṃdhivigrahayos tulyāyāṃ vṛddhau saṃdhim upeyāt |  
vighrahe hi kṣayavyayapravāsa-pratyavāyā bhavanti |*<sup>24</sup>

When equal prosperity results from a peace pact and from declaring war, he should resort to a peace pact. For, declaring war brings about losses, expenses, absence from home, and setbacks.

Relative to *vighraha*, then, *saṃdhi* is a state of inactivity. This is fully evident in the following passage, where *āsana*, 'remaining stationary', is preferred to *yāna*, 'marching to battle', for precisely the same reasons. By analogy, then, we can see that *saṃdhi* here refers to a state of non-engagement and relative inactivity. Further, *saṃdhi* and *vighraha* seem together to represent general relations between states, those of declared non-aggression or aggression, respectively.

When Kauṭilya does include considerations of relative strength into his foreign policy discussions at 7.3.1,<sup>25</sup> we see further that the purpose of *saṃdhi* (at least to this point in the chapter) is simply to forestall aggression. We have a lengthy discussion at 7.3.21-36<sup>26</sup> of peace pacts pursued by weaker kings. In all cases, the peace pacts require the weaker king to surrender something: himself; his land; his treasury; or his troops. The weaker king is essentially 'buying off' conquest and agreeing to a state of subordination structured by the peace pact itself.

To this point in the seventh book, Kauṭilya's political theory posits that relations between functionally sovereign *janapadas* are structured by one of two fundamental postures: *saṃdhi* and *vighraha*, that is, states of declared non-aggression or declared aggression. This, it would seem, represents the conceptual horizon for theorising interstate relations according to the *śāḍgūṇya*. Presumably, the *śāḍgūṇya* theory accounts for larger political formations as aggregates of individual *janapadas* politically structured either by outright conquest or through long-term subordination instituted through the conditions of various kinds of peace pacts. As a result, we have an image through 7.4.17<sup>27</sup> of the international order as comprised primarily of individual states carrying out relations with one another that are

normalised and structured through *saṃdhi* as denoting various kinds of non-aggression pacts.<sup>28</sup>

### Thematic Shift (7.4.18)

Kauṭilya concludes his exclusive focus on the *ṣādguṇya* at 7.4.18.<sup>29</sup> Here, I would argue, occurs one of the most important transitions in the text, one whose nature has been widely misunderstood. To understand this shift, we must look closely at chapter 7.4.

The fourth chapter of the seventh book (7.4) contains five ‘topics’ (*prakaraṇa*) in the extant text: *viḡrhyāsana*, ‘remaining stationary after declaring war’; *saṃdhāyāsana*, ‘remaining stationary after entering into a peace pact’; *viḡrhyayāna*, ‘marching into battle after declaring war’; *saṃdhāyayāna*, ‘marching into battle after entering into a peace pact’; and *saṃbhūyaprayāna*, ‘marching forth to battle after forming a partnership’. The first four of these combine the first four stratagems of the *ṣādguṇya*—*saṃdhi*, *viḡraha*, *āsana*, and *yāna*—while the fifth appears to depart from the *ṣādguṇya* to discuss a new topic: *saṃbhūya*, ‘having formed a partnership’.

I would argue that whoever is responsible for the division of the text into topics (*prakaraṇa*) has misunderstood the relationship between the material that constitutes the fourth and fifth topics of this chapter in the extant text and has, moreover, missed the important shift that happens here. To understand this, we must begin with the first two topics: *viḡrhyāsana* and *saṃdhāyāsana*. We are told that a king should ‘remain stationary’ (*āsana*) when he desires to outwit a rival he is unable to harm.<sup>30</sup> Hence, this is the sole condition—the inability to harm one’s rival—prompting the selection of the stratagem *āsana*. What the text actually goes on to discuss is whether the king should declare war<sup>31</sup> or enter a peace pact first.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Kauṭilya only discusses conditions prompting a declaration of war before remaining stationary, such as:

*yadā vā paśyet ‘svadaṇḍairmitrāṭavīdaṇḍair vā samaṃ jyāyāṃsaṃ vā karśayitum utsahe’ iti tadā kṛtabāhyābhyantarakṛtyo viḡrhyāsīta* |<sup>33</sup>

Alternatively, if he were to foresee: “I have the power to weaken an

equal or a stronger individual using either my own troops or the troops of my allies or tribal chiefs,” then, after doing the needful in the outer and the interior regions, he should declare war and then remain stationary.

There is no discussion of independent conditions prompting a peace pact, as Kautilya discusses them by merely stating: *vigṛhyāsanahetuprātilomye saṁdhāyāsīta*, “When the reverse of the reasons for declaring war and then remaining stationary is the case, then, after entering into a peace pact, he should remain stationary.”<sup>34</sup> Hence, there is no real discussion of ‘remaining stationary after entering into a peace pact’. But, because *āsana*, ‘remaining stationary’, is compatible with both declarations of war and peace pacts, there is no real interpretive difficulty in applying the ‘reverse’ of conditions as advised at 7.4.13.<sup>35</sup>

The next two topics, however, do present interpretive difficulties. Kautilya goes on to discuss *vigṛhyayāna* and *saṁdhāyayāna* at 7.4.14-18.<sup>36</sup> The initiation of discussion of *vigṛhyayāna*, ‘marching into battle after declaring war’, at 7.4.14 should be read with the previous passage, 7.4.13:

*vigṛhyāsanahetuprātilomye saṁdhāyāsīta* |<sup>37</sup>

*vigṛhyāsanahetubhirabhyuccitaḥ sarvasaṁdohavarjaṁ vigṛhya yāyāt* |<sup>38</sup>

When the reverse of the reasons for declaring war and then remaining stationary is the case, then, after entering into a peace pact, he should remain stationary.

When he has become strengthened by the reasons for declaring war and then remaining stationary, after declaring war, he should march into battle, taking care not to gather together his entire army.

The underlying logic of the fourth chapter to this point is as follows. Presumably, a king who can inflict harm on a rival does.<sup>39</sup> If he cannot,<sup>40</sup> he should assess whether a declaration of war will improve his position. If it can, he should declare war and, once his position is improved, should march into battle.<sup>41</sup> If it cannot, he is stuck signing a peace pact with his rival and remaining stationary,<sup>42</sup> presumably waiting until conditions become more favourable and he can declare war and attack.<sup>43</sup>

With the introduction of *saṃdhāyāna*, ‘marching into battle after entering into a peace pact’, at 7.4.18,<sup>44</sup> however, the logic of the passage breaks down. Here is the problem: after 7.4.14,<sup>45</sup> which we have already examined, Kauṭilya gives alternative conditions under which declaring war and marching to battle becomes advisable,<sup>46</sup> such as when *vyasanī paraḥ*, ‘my foe is facing a calamity’. Given that these represent positions of strategic advantage for the home king, it becomes difficult to understand the advice for *saṃdhāyāna* at 7.4.18:<sup>47</sup>

*viparyaye saṃdhāya yāyāt* |<sup>48</sup>

Under opposite circumstances, after entering into a peace pact, he should march into battle.

This instruction would seem to advise the king to enter a peace pact with his rival and attack *precisely when he does not have a strategic advantage* or, even more inexplicably, when he is in a strategic *disadvantage*, depending on how we understand *viparyaya*. These would seem to be times where marching into battle was generally inadvisable, particularly given the sensitivity to conditions Kauṭilya generally demonstrates. Moreover, are we really meant to assume that any time a king’s rival is not suffering a calamity he should enter a peace pact and attack? This is untenable. So, how do we understand this advice?

I contend that has been a crucial shift at 7.4.18 in the use of the term *saṃdhi*.<sup>49</sup> Up to this point, Kauṭilya has used it to refer only to non-aggression pacts, as I have shown. Indeed, throughout 7.4.1-17,<sup>50</sup> the assumption is that the king is signing a pact with his rival in order to forestall the rival’s aggression. I would argue that, at 7.4.18,<sup>51</sup> the king is not being advised to sign a non-aggression pact with his rival, but to enter a strategic partnership with a third king. The home king, in this reading, offsets the lack of strategic advantage *vis-à-vis* his rival by strengthening himself through an agreement with another king. Thus, the topic of *saṃdhāyāna* serves as a segue into the fifth topic in this chapter, *saṃbhūyaprayāna*, ‘marching forth into battle after forming a partnership’. I would argue that, in fact, the fourth and fifth topics of chapter 7.4<sup>52</sup> should really be understood as a single topic and that *saṃdhāyāna* and *saṃbhūyaprayāna* are synonyms.

This understanding of *saṃdhi* is the only way to resolve the interpretive problems presented by chapter 7.4 satisfactorily. The reading I have suggested, however, requires that we must also assume that something is being left unsaid. To wit, the strategy of *saṃdhāyayāna*, ‘marching into battle after entering into a peace pact’, is only to be pursued when the home king realises that he *must* attack. Not only is this required to make full sense of the advice at 7.4.18, but it is also precisely the logic with which *saṃbhūyaprayāṇa* is introduced at 7.4.19:

*yadā vā paśyēt ‘na śakyam ekena yātumavaśyaṃ ca yātavyam’ iti tadā samahīna-jyāyobhiḥ sāmavāyikaiḥ sambhūya yāyād, ekatra nirdiṣṭenāṃśen anekatrānirdiṣṭenāṃśena* <sup>53</sup>

Alternatively, if he were to foresee: “I am unable to march into battle alone, but it is imperative that I march into battle,” then he should march into battle after forming a partnership with consociates who may be equal, or weaker, or stronger, agreeing to fixed shares if conducted in one place, or to shares that are not fixed if conducted in more than one place.

I see 7.4.19, in other words, as a gloss or expansion of 7.4.18, making explicit what is only implied in 7.4.18.<sup>54</sup>

Although obscured by the division of 7.4.18-22 into two topics and, therefore, not typically recognised, this is perhaps the major thematic transition in the seventh book, which has great implications for understanding Kautilyan foreign policy as a whole. From 7.4.18 onwards, the text begins a mostly unbroken discussion of strategic partnerships that lasts for the better part of the next ten chapters. When Kautilya discusses *saṃdhi* itself for a second time,<sup>55</sup> he now makes a distinction between ‘treaties with stipulations’ and ‘treaties without stipulations’. The former are the foundation of strategic partnerships, while the latter appear to be similar to the non-aggression treaties just discussed. Of the two, Kautilya is really only interested at that point in treaties with stipulations and spends four chapters<sup>56</sup> discussing nothing but the negotiation of treaties with stipulations.

Understanding this shift makes clear that after 7.4.18, Kautilya has moved into a new theoretical framework for foreign relations that, although

not wholly different, in some respects nevertheless appears to supersede the comparatively one-dimensional discussion of peace pacts afforded by the *ṣādgunya*. I will return to this point in the conclusion.

## **Strategic Partnerships (7.4.19ff.)**

Nevertheless, we can see that after 7.4.18, Kauṭilya provides for the structuring of relations between sovereign states through a second kind of treaty: strategic partnerships (*samavāya*). Strategic partnerships represent a more dynamic mode of interstate relations whose significance to understanding the political order in the text has often been underappreciated. Such partnerships allowed, as we shall see, for far greater nuance in structured interactions between states of various relative strengths in which skilful negotiation played a far greater role in navigating an environment ripe for both cooperation and competition.

Strategic partnerships, it appears, were negotiated between independent sovereign states. The archetypal activity prescribed in such agreements is a joint military campaign, although other kinds of activities are also mentioned. The topic is introduced with the following passage, examined above:

*yadā vā paśyēt 'na śakyam ekena yātumavaśyaṃ ca yātavyam iti' tadā samahīna-*ḥ* jyāyobhiḥ sāmavāyikāiḥ sambhūya yāyād, ekaṭra nirdiṣṭenāṃśen anekatrānirdiṣṭenāṃśena* |<sup>57</sup>

Alternatively, if he were to foresee: “I am unable to march into battle alone, but it is imperative that I march into battle”, then he should march into battle after forming a partnership with consociates who may be equal, or weaker, or stronger, agreeing to fixed shares if conducted in one place, or to shares that are not fixed if conducted in more than one place.

Here, we have a situation in which it is necessary to march into war, but it is impossible to win alone. Hence, Kauṭilya prescribes forming a strategic partnership with consociates or confederates (*sāmavāyikāiḥ sambhūya*). The spoils of war are to be divided based on a predetermined agreement. At their most basic, such strategic partnerships are opportunities for cooperation between states through which they can meet strategic goals

and, crucially, enrich themselves. In this sense, such strategic partnerships are akin to contracts in civil law.

But, if strategic partnerships provided opportunities for cooperation and mutual advancement, they were also themselves opportunities for political manoeuvring and competition. Strength and reliability were key considerations,<sup>58</sup> and inequality among partners established the key parameters for strategic thought. Kauṭilya tells us:

*teṣāṃ jyāyasaikena dvābhyāṃ samābhyāṃ vā sambhūya yāvavyam  
iti dvābhyāṃ samābhyāṃ śreyaḥ | jyāyasā hyavagr̥hītaścarati  
samābhyāṃ atisaṃdhānād̥hikye vā | tau hi sukhau bhedayitum  
duṣṭaścaiko dvābhyāṃ niyantum bhedopagrahaṃ copagantum iti |  
samenaikena dvābhyāṃ hīnābhyāṃ veti dvābhyāṃ hīnābhyāṃ  
śreyaḥ | tau hi dvikārya-sādhakau vaśyau ca bhavataḥ |<sup>59</sup>*

Among [confederated allies], should one march into battle after forming a partnership with one ruler who is stronger or with two equals? It is better to do so with two equals; for with a stronger ruler, he operates under his control, while when he is in partnership with two equals, he operates with plenty of opportunities to outwit them. For, it is easy to cause dissension between the two; and, if one becomes traitorous, for the two to restrain him; and to seize the one who is in the grip of dissension. With one who is equal or with two who are weaker? It is better to do so with two who are weaker; for they accomplish two tasks and remain under his control.

Much like non-aggression pacts, strategic partnerships between stronger and weaker states typically result in the latter ceding control to the former, to the likely detriment of the weaker states. In this, we see the capacity for strategic partnerships to structure interstate relations through competition.

Compared with non-aggression pacts, where the weaker state essentially tried to buy off conquest, strategic partnerships provided far greater opportunity for states of all kinds to seek advantage by ‘outwitting’ their partners. Outwitting (*atisaṃdhāna*) means entering or executing relations that provide particular benefit to one party over against the other. The vast majority of Kauṭilya’s advice on strategic partnerships pertains to opportunities for outwitting, whether on the part of the weaker, equal, or stronger state. As such, strategic partnerships were not only crucial

mechanisms for structuring state relations, but also themselves important instruments for establishing and maintaining political dominance. They appear, moreover, to have been far more delicate tools for such ends, able to accommodate far more nuanced relationships, than the comparatively simple non-aggression pacts. To the extent that one could skilfully engage in such strategic partnerships, they would appear to have provided a less diplomatically-risky and more nuanced alternative to unilateral non-aggression or subordination. Moreover, it is clear that Kauṭilya placed great emphasis on strategic partnerships, probably precisely for this reason.

## **Strategic Partnerships as Political Formations**

It is clear to this point that both non-aggression pacts and strategic partnerships structured relations between states. Much of this can be implied from Kauṭilya's discussions about negotiating such partnerships. But, we read also more directly of the existence of such partnerships *as political formations themselves* in several places: in advice on strategies to be used by kings about to be attacked by strategic partnerships,<sup>60</sup> in instructions on competition or conflict between two strategic partnerships,<sup>61</sup> and in advice on the formation of strategic partnerships in response to threat by stronger kings.<sup>62</sup> This gives us a clear sense of the extent to which such political formations were common features in international relations as well as the internal strategic considerations of individual states, a likely political reality not comfortably addressed by the *śāḍgunya* alone.

Such discussions of strategic partnerships as political formations reveal something of their internal relations. Strategic partnerships can either be comprised of a single 'principal' member or 'chief' (*pradhāna*) and other, 'weaker' members (*hīna*), or they can be 'without a principal' or 'chief' partner (*pradhānābhāva*). The nature of their organisation, whether with or without a chief partner, influences the strategy of a king attacked by such partnerships. In the former case, the home king tries to divide the principal from the weaker members of the partnership. In the latter, the king looks for those partners who can present some kind of foothold for pursuing his strategic interests. Kauṭilya lists the following possibilities:

*pradhānābhāve sāmavāyikānām utsāhayitāraṃ sthirakarmāṇam*

*anuraktaprakṛtiṃ lobhāt bhayāt vā saṃghātam upāgataṃ vijigīṣorbhītam rājyapratīsambaddham mitram calāmitram vā pūrvān uttarābhāve sādhayet-utsāhayitāram ātmanisargeṇa, sthirakarmāṇam sāntvapraṇipātena, anuraktaprakṛtiṃ kanyādānayaṇābhyaṃ, lubdham aṃśadvaiguṇyena, bhītam ebhyaḥ kośadaṇḍānugraheṇa, svato bhītam viśvāsya pratibhūpradānena, rājyapratīsambaddham ekībhāvopagamanena, mitram ubhayataḥ priyahitābhyaṃ upakāratyāgena vā, calāmitram avadhṛtam anapakāropakārābhyaṃ | yo vā yathāyogaṃ bhajeta taṃ tathā sādhayet, sāmādānabhedadaṇḍair vā yathāpatsu vyākhyāsyāmaḥ |<sup>63</sup>*

If there is no chief, he should secure from among the [partners] one of the following: one who galvanises them, one who perseveres in his undertakings, one with loyal subjects, one who joined the confederation out of greed or fear, one who is afraid of the seeker after conquest, one who is anchored to his kingdom, an ally, or a mobile enemy—selecting those listed earlier in the absence of those listed later—the one who galvanised them by offering himself, the one who perseveres in his undertakings with conciliatory prostrations, the one with loyal subjects by giving and receiving girls in marriage, the greedy one by offering a double share, the one afraid of them by providing support with treasure and troops, the one naturally afraid by building up his confidence and giving a surety, the one anchored to his kingdom by entering into close coalition with him, the ally by doing things cherished by and beneficial to both or by handing over benefit he has received, and the mobile enemy who is confined by halting injurious actions and offering assistance. Alternatively, he should secure any one of them using any means by which he may become disunited, or through conciliation, gifts, dissension, and military force as we will explain in the section on danger.

Collectively, these two kinds of strategic partnerships, one with principal and subordinates and the other without a principal, give us a much more nuanced picture of the kinds of political formations that populated international relations beyond the static notions of long-term non-aggression pacts through which subordination was institutionalised. That such formations were a regular part of general strategic thought, particularly with

respect to military activity is evident here in the seventh book as well as elsewhere in the text.<sup>64</sup>

## Conclusion

We have, in the end, two distinct perspectives on international relations in the seventh book of the *Arthaśāstra*. There is no doubt that the *śāḍgunya* provides the basic language for discussing relations between states, but it supports a picture of foreign relations in which individual states vie against one another and establish relations primarily through non-aggression pacts. In fact, Kauṭilya spends far more time discussing strategic partnerships, so much that taking full account of these political formations changes fundamentally how we think about political relations in the period. It would appear that states routinely engaged in such activity and that it was a crucial part of interstate relations, allowing for strategic breadth and nuance in both the achievement of specific goals as well as competition with adversaries.

Moreover, attention to the distinction between non-aggression pacts and strategic partnerships that I have attempted to outline here, both relying on different conceptualisations of the umbrella term ‘*saṁdhi*’, reveal a major shift within the seventh book of the *Arthaśāstra* at 7.4.18.<sup>65</sup> This should, I would argue, be regarded as one of *the* major junctures in the seventh book, with the implication that we have here the joining of two different streams of political thought in the period. Preliminary investigation comparing 7.1.1-7.4.17,<sup>66</sup> on one hand, and 7.4.18<sup>67</sup> and following, on the other, suggest important shifts in technical terminology as well as theoretical assumptions. Recognising the difference between kinds of treaties helps shine light on the shift at 7.4.18 and potentially opens up new understandings about the composition of the seventh book.

Finally, although it perhaps barely needs reiteration, Kauṭilya’s treatment of strategic partnerships helps underscore certain foundational dispositions within Kauṭilyan foreign policy. The unwavering goal of foreign policy in the *Arthaśāstra* is world conquest, the victory of the single king, and the subject of all foreign policy deliberations is the *vijigīṣu*, ‘the seeker after conquest’. Kauṭilya has no interest in stable, normalised relations with other states inside of a pacified international order that protects their

sovereignty and discourages territorial conquest. It is possible that such a proposition would have seemed to him utter fantasy. What is clear is that Kautilya's concern with strategic partnerships has far less to do with cooperation than competition, and that states that were not outwitting were at constant risk of being outwitted. Nevertheless, strategic partnerships seem to have been able to play the role of stabilising international relations, at least insofar as they gave weaker states a regular mechanism for resisting conquest by more powerful states and provided enhanced opportunities for advancement as well as security. It is not too much to claim that strategic partnerships are in many ways at the heart of Kautilyan foreign policy, and they may well provide a crucial link between the text and the political history of the subcontinent as derived from other sources.

#### NOTES

1. Patrick Olivelle, *King Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* (A New Annotated Translation), Oxford University Press, New York, 2013, p. 63, [1.1.1]. See also: T. Trautmann, *Kautilya and the Arthaśāstra*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1971; M. McClish, *Political Brahmanism and the State: A Compositional History of the Arthaśāstra*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2009. Note: I follow Olivelle's (2013) translation of the *Arthaśāstra* in this paper unless otherwise noted.
2. Patrick Olivelle, *King Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* (A New Annotated Translation), Oxford University Press, New York, 2013, p. 274, [6.2.13-29].
3. As Olivelle has recently argued, we should understand *saṃdhi* and *vigraha* "not as simple statements of facts – the states of war or peace – between kingdoms or states, but as deliberate political and military strategies employed by states against each other" (2011, 139). They are, in other words, not static conditions of 'peace' and 'war,' as is often supposed, but strategies involving a limited declaration of non-aggression or open hostility between states. I follow Olivelle's translation of the individual strategies of the *śāḍḡṇya*, except for *vigraha*, which I translate as 'declaring war'. It should be kept in mind that, in keeping with Olivelle's argument, this is only a public declaration of hostilities and not the initiation of combat itself. See note 9.
4. This is the meaning of *dvaidhībhāva* as introduced in chapter 7.1.
5. Patrick Olivelle, note 2, pp. 277ff, [7.1.1-19ff].
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 277-280, [7.1].
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 277-287, [7.1.1-7.4.17].
8. *Ibid.*, p. 277, [7.1.6].
9. Patrick Olivelle, "War and Peace: Semantics of *saṃdhi* and *vigraha* in the *Arthaśāstra*," in Bertil Tikkanen and Albion M. Butters (eds.),

*Pūrvaparaprajñābhinandanam: East and West, Past and Present, Indological and Other Essays in Honour of Klaus Karttunen*, Studia Orientalia 110, Finnish Oriental Society, Helsinki, 2011, p. 132.

10. R.P. Kangle (tr.), *The Kauṭīlyya Arthaśāstra (Part II)*, 2nd Edition, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2000 [1972], p. 321.
11. R.P. Kangle, *The Kauṭīlyya Arthaśāstra (Part III): A Study*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2000 [1965], p. 251.
12. Patrick Olivelle, note 2, pp. 277-287, [7.1.1-7.4.17].
13. *Ibid.*, p. 277, [7.1.13-19].
14. *Ibid.*, [7.1.13].
15. *Ibid.*, p. 282, [7.3.2].
16. *Ibid.*, p. 277, [7.1.18].
17. *Ibid.*, p. 282, [7.3.2].
18. *Ibid.*, p. 283, [7.3.7].
19. *Ibid.*, [7.3.10].
20. At 7.1.20-31, Kauṭīlyya advises that kings use whichever of the six stratagems yields greater prosperity, slower or smaller decline, or shorter stability leading to prosperity relative to the rival. When, however, the prosperity, decline, or stability of the home king and his rival are the same, the text advises the king to pursue a peace pact (7.1.23, 27, 30). Here, it is clear that the peace pact is not a strategic partnership offering a dynamic context for pursuing advantage through the negotiation and undertaking of coordinated activity, but a holding action meant to promote parity by forestalling aggressive intervention. See: Patrick Olivelle, note 2, p. 278.
21. In the next subsection, 7.1.32-38, Kauṭīlyya shifts to address the strategic conditions in which pursuit of each of the six stratagems is advisable. In the long passage 7.1.32 he lists twelve different contexts in which peace pacts should be used. It is clear that nowhere here the peace pacts are understood to involve coordinated strategic activity. Rather, they are used to create a context wherein the parties to the pact pursue independent activities (*svakarma*) in parallel. Relative advantage is gained not by the skillful pursuit of joint action but by the comparative success of one's own activities, by the sabotaging of the rival's activities, by engendering the enmity of the rival's allies, or by facilitating deleterious courses of action undertaken by the rival. All such pacts stand in contrast to the kind of strategic partnerships discussed later in the chapter. See: Patrick Olivelle, note 2, pp. 278-280.
22. Patrick Olivelle, note 2, pp. 280-281, [7.2.1-2].
23. *Ibid.*, p. 282, [7.3.1].
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281, [7.3.1-2].
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 283-285, [7.3.21-36].
27. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.17].
28. This picture is complicated somewhat by the practices of 'seeking refuge' (*saṃśraya*) and 'double stratagem' (*dvaiddhībhāva*) as well as the role of 'natural' 'allies' (*mitra*) and 'enemies' (*amitra, ari, śatru*, etc.). See: Patrick Olivelle, note 9, p. 137.
29. Patrick Olivelle, note 2, p. 288, [7.4.18].
30. *Ibid.*, p. 285, [7.4.4].

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286, [7.4.5-12].
32. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.13].
33. *Ibid.*, p. 285, [7.4.5].
34. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.13].
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288, [7.4.14-18].
37. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.13].
38. *Ibid.*, [7.4.14].
39. *Ibid.*, p. 282, [7.3.2].
40. *Ibid.*, p. 285, [7.4.4].
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286, [7.4.5-12].
42. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.13].
43. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.14-17]. There is no mention of how someone in this condition can improve his position, nor does Kautilya tell us what to do if the declaration of war does not improve one's strategic position.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.18].
45. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.14].
46. *Ibid.*, p. 287, [7.4.15-17].
47. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.18].
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-287, [7.4.1-17].
51. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.18].
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-288, [7.4].
53. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.19].
54. A key piece of evidence that might be seen to disprove this interpretation is the presence of the connective particle *vā*, which serves to present the conditions given at 7.4.19 as an alternative to the advice at 7.4.18. I think in this case, however, the phrase *yadā vā paśyēt* is meant to introduce conditions (7.4.19-21) that all subordinate to 7.4.18. Notice that the conditions given at 7.4.5 are introduced with the words *yadā vā paśyēt*, but are not alternatives to the conditions at 7.4.4, serving rather as an explication thereof.
55. Patrick Olivelle, note 2, pp. 292-294, [7.6.1-15].
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 302-312, [7.9-7.12].
57. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.19].
58. *Ibid.*, p. 291, [7.5.38-39].
59. *Ibid.*, [7.5.40-44].
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 299, 315-317, [7.8.1-4, 7.14].
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 300-302, [7.8.11-34].
62. *Ibid.* pp. 317-318, [7.15.3-6].
63. *Ibid.* p. 316, [7.14.10-11].
64. *Ibid.*, p. 360, 364, 370, [9.4.23, 9.6.29, 9.7.59].
65. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.18].
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 277-287, [7.1.1-7.4.17].
67. *Ibid.*, p. 288, [7.4.18].

# 3

## Statecraft and Intelligence Analysis in the *Kauṭīlīya-Arthaśāstra*

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“An arrow, discharged by an archer, may kill one person or may not kill (even one), but intellect operated by a wise man would kill even children in the womb.”<sup>1</sup>

“As Dr. Mandelbaum would say, he has assembled the information, but where is the knowledge?”<sup>2</sup>

The ancient Indian *Kauṭīlīya-Arthaśāstra* is a classical work of political theory and theorised statecraft and a foundational text of the theory of International Relations.<sup>3</sup> And, one must add, the *Arthaśāstra* is also a pioneering text of Intelligence Studies. As a work of statecraft, the *Arthaśāstra* is ‘cognition-centric’ and features ‘intelligence’ prominently, but the terms ‘intelligence’, ‘intelligence analysis’, ‘intelligence estimate’, ‘strategic planning’ and ‘grand strategy’ are absent in the text. Before we dig a bit deeper into the text of the *Arthaśāstra* with respect to the aforementioned terms, let us first—for the purpose of terminological clarity—briefly untangle the term ‘intelligence’. A good basic definition is provided by Adda B. Bozeman:

Intelligence in its primary or generic sense is everywhere a property

of the mind. It stands for human beings' inborn capacity to come to terms with life by engaging in thought and acquiring, developing, and investing knowledge... Intelligence in its derivative political sense is a component of statecraft that centers upon the need of one politically unified community to have reliable information, knowledge, or 'intelligence' about other societies in its environment. Intelligence '2', then, is by no means a wayward offspring of intelligence '1'. The records suggest rather that the elementary idea was nowhere and at no time expunged, it was drafted into the vocabularies of domestic and international politics to serve the security interests of any given politically independent organism.<sup>4</sup>

Bozeman's definitions of the term 'intelligence', in its generic and derivative (political) meaning, have in common that *generating knowledge* is the central issue. Intelligence '2' refers to the *process* of generating knowledge by collecting and analysing open and secret data/information relevant for 'national security'. This operational and cognitive process takes the form of an "intelligence cycle": tasking > collection > analysis > estimates > dissemination. Intelligence '2' also refers to the *product* of these activities: assessments and estimates based on analysed data/information.

This paper concentrates on the components 'analysis', 'assessment' and 'estimates' of the intelligence cycle.<sup>5</sup> Our focus is intelligence as the cognitive activity of sorting out, analysing, co-relating and synthesising 'raw' data or information on capabilities and intentions of foreign actors. The products of such analytical work are 'assessments of the situation' and intelligence 'estimates'. The latter include inferences derived out of the analysis of data/information—pointing into the future. Intelligence estimates try to generate 'scenarios' of future developments pertaining to the external security of the state. The term intelligence is mostly used with respect to inter-state relations; and that is what we do in this paper as well, i.e. leaving aside intelligence dealing internal security. We also leave aside here 'active measures' and 'covert actions' which are often seen as an integral part of intelligence.<sup>6</sup>

## Intelligence in the *Arthaśāstra*: Methodological Hurdles and Approaches

Dealing with the question of intelligence analysis and estimates in the *Arthaśāstra*—in the context of political science—means facing daunting methodological hurdles. We have to rely on Sanskrit philologists translating the text—R.P. Kangle (1972) into English and J.J. Meyer (1926) into German. Neither scholar is an intelligence expert or political scientist and thus is unfamiliar with the concepts and vocabulary of the political science sub-discipline, Intelligence Studies.

Also, with regard to questions of intelligence, Kauṭilya often uses *euphemisms* and *metaphors*. One cannot even exclude the possibility that the intelligence virtuoso Kauṭilya might have had no interest to explicitly disclose the cognitive methodology of intelligence analysis and estimates which are at the heart—or more precisely, at the ‘brain’—of statecraft. Kauṭilya might have viewed intelligence analysis and estimates as exclusive *Herrschaftswissen* (to use a term of Max Scheler), i.e. restricted knowledge of ruling elites which is not deemed fit for popular consumption.

In spite of these serious methodical problems, I believe that it is possible to identify and to reconstruct Kauṭilya’s core concepts of intelligence analysis and estimates—even though they are mostly *not explicitly stated* and elaborated in the *Arthaśāstra*. That means, when we deal with Kauṭilya’s understanding of intelligence beyond its dimensions of collection, organisation and covert actions, we mostly can *not* rely on ‘self-evident’ quotes from the text of the *Arthaśāstra*. Instead, we have to ‘read between the lines’ in identifying latent ideas and concepts with respect to intelligence analysis and estimates. Thus, we follow Max Weber’s approach of the *reconstruction of latent meanings* and complexes of meaning with respect to intelligence analysis in the *Arthaśāstra*.<sup>7</sup>

Instead of a strictly hermeneutic methodology of interpreting the *Arthaśāstra*, we use a heuristic approach oriented on Helmuth Plessner’s concept of “*covariance*” which assumes that intrinsically (or genetically) related ideas can be generated in historically and culturally *distant spaces*.<sup>8</sup> Such ideas are not identical, but structurally *homologous*. We, therefore, start from the working assumption that in regard to intelligence analysis

and estimates there is a *structural homology* between central ideas in the *Kautilīya-Arthaśāstra* and key concepts in Sherman Kent's 1948 study *Strategic Intelligence*—the foundational work on intelligence analysis.<sup>9</sup> We think this assumption is reliable because Kautilya and Kent engaged in the same area of investigation and tackled the same problematic. And both concentrated on the essentials of this problematic—not secondary attributes and derivative issues.

Kent's categories and terminology can help us in the conceptional reconstruction of latent ideas with respect to intelligence analysis, assessments and estimates in the *Kautilīya-Arthaśāstra*. To re-emphasise the crucial methodological point: in assuming conceptional "covariance" or homology between Kautilya and Kent, we do *not* mean projecting modern concepts backwards onto the *Arthaśāstra* as a means to subsume or 'swallow up' its original idea contents. We do not intend to present Kautilyan ideas as 'inchoate approximations' to the much later concepts of the modern, Western author Sherman Kent. The *originality* and *eigenvalue* of Kautilya's ideas should be obvious as they were generated 2300 years ahead of Kent's homologous categories.

Who is Sherman Kent? Kent (1903-1986) was a Yale professor of European History. In World War II, he joined the *Office of Strategic Services* (OSS), which was a first attempt to centralise US intelligence capabilities even though the intelligence activities of various government departments and the Army and Navy were continued. The OSS, under its chief 'Wild Bill' Donovan, is mostly portrayed as an 'action'-oriented intelligence organisation, but it also developed an outstanding analytical capacity recruiting first-class academics—historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists and geographers. In the OSS *Research and Analysis* branch, Kent served as the head of the Europe-Africa Division till the end of World War II. After returning to academia and writing *Strategic Intelligence*, Kent joined the CIA in 1950 where he became the head of the *Office of National Estimates* (ONE) from 1952 to 1967.<sup>10</sup>

## **‘The Easy Part’: Intelligence Collection, Organisation and Covert Action in the *Arthaśāstra***

In the (ideal-type) ‘Kauṭīlyan state’ of the *Arthaśāstra*, the secret or intelligence service is a central and indispensable component of state capacity. This applies to both the internal and external security of the state.<sup>11</sup> However, we must keep in mind that the Kauṭīlyan state is a “patrimonial state” (Max Weber) in which the ruler and the state still form a symbiosis—albeit one that begins to loosen up. The government and the state bureaucracy have not yet gained their (abstract) eigenvalue but are still attached to the ruler’s court/household. Consequently, the Kauṭīlyan secret service has not yet evolved into the differentiated bureaucratic apparatus which became established in the early 20th century. For didactic purposes, the Kauṭīlyan secret service might be compared with the intelligence services of the Republic of Venice or the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) between the 12th and 18th century or with Sir Francis Walsingham’s (1532-90) *Secret Intelligence Service* in Tudor England.

Internally, the Kauṭīlyan secret service is used for comprehensive surveillance of the people and the elites—especially within the state apparatus. There is a dense network of stationary and mobile secret agents and informants collecting information about treasonous activities, corruption, serious crime and the popular mood. In addition, the secret service acts as a ‘*secret police*’ with executive powers and engages in various forms of ‘active measures’:

- Tracking down suspected treasonable individuals and groups, infiltrating and manipulating them.<sup>12</sup>
- Tracing corruption, embezzlement and abuse of office in the state apparatus, including ‘sting operations’.<sup>13</sup>
- Silent liquidation of enemies of the state, whose extra-judicial killing is disguised as accident, normal crime or natural death.<sup>14</sup>
- Staging political public relations (PR) operations to influence public opinion.<sup>15</sup>
- Counter-Espionage, including the use of double agents, and operations against foreign subversion and sabotage.<sup>16</sup>

The Kauṭīlyan secret service is also vital and indispensable for the external

security of the state. Again, there are two prime tasks: collecting information about foreign states—friendly, hostile or neutral—and covert actions against adversary states. The activities of the Kautilyan intelligence service in foreign states include:

- Information gathering on the political, military and economic situation in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and political intentions. Of paramount importance is the identification of political factions, conspiracies and popular discontent. This is done by secret agents operating in a foreign country and by the recruitment of local informants.<sup>17</sup>
- Diplomatic personnel in foreign countries must collect information, recruit agents of influence and participate in subversive operations— independently and in collaboration with secret agents operating in the host country.<sup>18</sup>
- Whenever political tensions and instability are ascertained, the secret service should use local agents of influence to exacerbate tensions and give covert support to treasonous persons and groups as to further weaken and discredit the established governance. Political figures who stand in the way of one’s own interests should be targeted for (covert) assassinations.<sup>19</sup>
- If an armed conflict looms, the secret service should weaken the will to fight of the leadership and people as well as the combat power of the armed forces through sabotage operations, ‘psychological warfare’ and covert assassinations of key political and/or military leaders.<sup>20</sup>

Kautilya’s remarks about the secret service in the *Arthaśāstra* demonstrate that his understanding of intelligence affairs is profound to an extent that necessitates his personal and practical experience in this milieu. Thus, the picture drawn of Kautilya and his intelligence activities in the classical Indian play *Mudrarakshasa* by Vishakhadatta (ca. 6th century AD) seems quite insightful.<sup>21</sup> Kautilya obviously knows what he is talking about when addressing intelligence issues like:

- what are the professional requirements for different categories of secret service agents.<sup>22</sup>
- which covers are suitable for secret agents.<sup>23</sup>

- what are the psychological, social and political dispositions to be exploited for the recruitment of informers and agents of influence.<sup>24</sup>
- how can the secret service be controlled by organisational segmentation and mutual surveillance within the service.<sup>25</sup>
- how are secret agents rewarded for special achievements and punished for misconduct.<sup>26</sup>
- what forms of subversion and covert actions are most suitable for achieving foreign policy objectives.<sup>27</sup>

When reading through the *Arthaśāstra* one gets the impression that the Kauṭīlyan intelligence service is very much ‘collection-centric’, ‘operator-centric’ and particularly ‘action-centric’—and is to a large degree operating as a secret police. Hence, the secondary literature on the intelligence dimension of the *Arthaśāstra* almost *exclusively focuses on intelligence collection, organization and covert action* in the Kauṭīlyan intelligence service. Such a focus requires only modest methodological-theoretical efforts in the interpretation of the text. And, on matters pertaining to intelligence collection, organisation and covert action, Kauṭīliya can be generously quoted and paraphrased.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, the literature pays little or no attention to intelligence analysis, assessment and estimates in the *Arthaśāstra*. That is not surprising because Kauṭīlyan intelligence *appears* not to be ‘cognition-centric’. But by digging deeper into the *Arthaśāstra*, it can be shown that Kauṭīliya has much to offer on intelligence analysis, assessments and estimates as well as strategic planning. One may add, it could not be otherwise because intelligence analysis and estimates are a decisive factor in Kauṭīliya’s understanding of statecraft and grand strategy.

## **Kauṭīliya: Knowledge is the Foundation of Statecraft**

Adda Bozeman refers to intelligence as a “component of statecraft”. The latter she defines as follows: “The term ‘statecraft’... stands for the sum total of human dispositions, doctrines, policies, institutions, processes, and operations that are designed to assure the governance, security, and survival of a politically unified human group.”<sup>29</sup> As mentioned above, she sees intelligence as a form of knowledge and concludes: “*successful statecraft*

is always and everywhere dependent on good intelligence.”<sup>30</sup> As we shall see, the triad *statecraft-knowledge-intelligence* is a key concept in the *Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra*.

“Knowledge is Power” is an idea usually attributed to Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and sometimes to the Persian poet Firdausi (940-1020). However, the idea that *knowledge constitutes power* is already a leitmotif of the *Arthaśāstra*. In statecraft, Kautilya sees three forms of power at work: the “power of knowledge”, the “power of the treasury [economy] and the army” and the “power of [the ruler’s personal] valour”.<sup>31</sup> In Kautilyan statecraft, *the power of knowledge takes the first place*. “[T]he king with the eyes of intelligence and [political] science” can overcome rival kings even if they possess greater economic and military resources and personal valour.<sup>32</sup>

Knowledge has two dimensions of meaning. One is ‘*content-oriented*’: knowing things as opposed to not knowing them; acquiring and storing ‘information’ instead of being ignorant or ill-informed. The other dimension of knowledge is ‘*method-oriented*’: the way of thinking, the cognitive ‘processing’ of acquired and stored information, i.e. self-reflective or scientific thinking versus the non-reflective, mere intuitive or magical correlation of things perceived.<sup>33</sup>

For Kautilya, the knowledge underpinning statecraft has to be *substantive in content* and *scientific in method*. The fundamental importance of (double-sided) knowledge in statecraft is emphasised right at the beginning of Book I of the *Arthaśāstra*: No ruler is a ‘born ruler’, but has to acquire the knowledge that will qualify him to be a ruler.<sup>34</sup> Acquiring knowledge is a lifelong task and an integral part of the daily routine for ruler.<sup>35</sup> No ‘power instinct’, no leadership talent, no personal valour and no religious and/or magical dignity can substitute knowledge in Kautilyan statecraft.

What kind of knowledge<sup>36</sup> does the ruler have to acquire to gain the necessary competence in statecraft? Kautilya’s selection criteria are: knowledge—in terms of ‘information content’ and methodology—that will enable the ruler to maintain and expand a) the power of the state and b) the welfare of the people. And that includes particularly security-relevant

knowledge about internal and external threats to the power of the state (and thus, in Kauṭilya's view, also the welfare of the people). Knowledge so defined is the foundation and essence of statecraft. The ignorant, ill-informed and uneducated ruler is a danger to himself, the state and the people.

Kauṭilya demands of the ruler a life-long *thirst for knowledge*, i.e. the “desire to learn, listening (to the teacher), learning, retention, thorough understanding, reflection, rejection (of false views) and intentness on truth.”<sup>37</sup> The ruler “should learn new things and familiarise himself with those already learned, and listen repeatedly to things not learned. For, from (continuous) study ensues a (trained) intellect, from the intellect (comes) practical application, (and) from practical application results self-possession; such is the efficacy of sciences.”<sup>38</sup> And, to repeat what was said above: For Kauṭilya, the knowledge required for statecraft has to be both substantive in content and scientific in method.

A ruler's lack of knowledge is a cardinal sin—and that should be understood quite literally: ignorance is the breeding ground for defective character formation which means the ruler's policy-making remains dominated by instincts and affective impulses. “Lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and fool-hardiness”—Kauṭilya calls them the ruler's “six enemies”—cannot be controlled and/or sublimated without knowledge: “the practice of (this) science (gives such control). For, the whole of this science means control over the senses”.<sup>39</sup> As only “science imparts discipline”, ignorant and uneducated rulers being driven by passion have ruined themselves and their states.<sup>40</sup> “These and many other kings, giving themselves up to the group of six enemies, perished with their kinsmen and kingdoms, being without control over their senses.”<sup>41</sup> This conclusion, Kauṭilya backs up with references to historical and mythological examples.

Knowledge—in terms of ‘information content’ and scientific analysis—is the supreme factor in statecraft. The ruler, after “casting out the group of six enemies”, should “*cultivate his intellect... [and] keep a watchful eye by means of his spies*”.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, *intelligence* as the cognitive activity of analysing information relevant for the state's external security is necessarily *a constitutive element of the knowledge underlying statecraft*. Receiving and cognitively ‘digesting’ security-relevant information takes

up a significant part of the Kautilyan ruler's daily schedule.<sup>43</sup> The information supplied by spies and diplomats gets analysed by the ruler and his staff and transformed into intelligence assessments which in turn provide the basis for strategic planning. So Kautilya writes about intelligence and statecraft: "For, the king, trained in the sciences...enjoys the earth alone without sharing it with any other ruler, being devoted to the welfare of all beings."<sup>44</sup> That means that statecraft based on knowledge which significantly incorporates intelligence can empower the ruler to become the political unifier—the *chakravartin*—of the whole Indian subcontinent. And that is the ultimate—strategic and normative—goal of Kautilyan statecraft.

## **Intelligence Means Generating Knowledge**

Following the above sketched methodological approach of "covariance" or structural homology, we now use Sherman Kent's concept of intelligence as heuristics for explicating the cognitive/analytical dimension of Kautilya's treatment of intelligence. Kent gives us a basal definition of intelligence:

Intelligence is a simple and self-evident thing. As an activity it is *the pursuit of a certain kind of knowledge*; as a phenomenon it is the *resultant knowledge* [...] And strategic intelligence, we might call knowledge upon which our nation's foreign relations, in war and peace, must rest.<sup>45</sup>

Or as Stephen Marrin puts it half a century later: "Properly understood, the role of intelligence is to collect information and to analyse it as a way *to produce knowledge* about a competitor or adversary."<sup>46</sup> Or, to quote Kent once more: intelligence "can be thought—indeed it often is—as an organisation engaged in the *manufacture of a product (knowledge) out of raw materials (all manner of data)* and labour (highly skilled, but not practical in the business sense of the word)".<sup>47</sup>

Kent's definition of intelligence, I argue, is *homologous to Kautilya's* because of the centrality of knowledge and knowledge generation in both Kautilya's and Kent's understanding of intelligence. For both, knowledge is the key factor in statecraft and this knowledge is to a significant extent generated out of intelligence analysis, assessments and estimates.

Intelligence means generating knowledge about what is unknown and not-yet-known in a principally contingent political environment. At all times, human life and the existence of states are characterised by a latent, but pervasive sense of looming dangers. Human life and history demonstrate beyond doubt that the security of individuals as well as political communities is always precarious and threats are very real. The precariousness of human existence—individually and collectively—is a fact of life. That is self-evident for the sober realist Kauṭīliya whose *political anthropology* rests on two basic assumptions: a) lust and affects like striving for domination lead inevitably to conflicts of interests and power struggles, and b) man’s political world is one of anarchy and insecurity within and among political communities, i.e. *mātsya-nyāya*.<sup>48</sup> In the world of *mātsya-nyāya*, one’s security, if not survival, depends on gaining knowledge through intelligence collection and analysis.

An adequate understanding of Kauṭīliya’s concept of intelligence—in terms of collection and analysis—must take into account that it is rooted in his political anthropology. Kauṭīliya’s linkage of intelligence and political anthropology is quite similar to what Adda Bozeman observes: “[T]he world is divided, conflicted, and anarchical... Security-conscious governments in all ages and places appear to have accepted these persistent complexities as standing challenges in their conduct of foreign affairs by collecting, processing, and institutionalising their own political intelligence.”<sup>49</sup>

Ignorance about the surrounding world means uncertainty or a sense of ‘false security’. Knowledge derived from intelligence reduces (political) uncertainty. Thus, intelligence cum knowledge is intrinsically linked to security. Knowledge does not *eo ipso* create security but knowledge enables human beings and communities to do something about their security. If one lacks intelligence cum knowledge, i.e. ‘groping in the dark’—one is up for ‘nasty surprises’. If one knows ‘what’s going on’, s/he has a chance to protect the self and to exploit the situation to her/his advantage. However, simply collecting and storing information won’t tell anybody ‘what’s going on’—exceptions merely confirm the rule. The information collected has to be analysed and assessed, i.e. turned into intelligence which provides the knowledge for political action conducive to one’s security and interests.

Approaching the question of intelligence analysis and assessment in

the *Arthaśāstra* necessitates that we step back from the cliché that intelligence is foremost a matter of spies and espionage. At all times, most of the intelligence which is vital for the security of a state do *not* come from the clandestine collection of secret information, but from ‘open sources’ of information. One does not need espionage and secret agents to find out what is the geography, the climate, the raw materials, the economy, the language, the religion, the culture, the social organisation, the elites’ mentality or the political tradition of a foreign country. This information can be obtained by travelling in a foreign country, keeping your eyes open and talking to people from all walks of life. And Kautilya recommends that exactly this should be done by diplomats and intelligence informants like long-distance traders or wandering monks and artists.<sup>50</sup> One does not have to be a trained, skilful spy, but must be open-minded and curious. Not the paraphernalia of the spying trade, but brainpower matters. Then, the multifarious impressions and information collected in a foreign country can be cognitively synthesised. Thus, one gains what Kent calls ‘*basic descriptive intelligence*’ which is the foundation of all sound intelligence. Basic descriptive intelligence comes from “unromantic open-and-above-board observation and research”.<sup>51</sup> Basic descriptive intelligence provides the indispensable precondition for assessing the capabilities and the dispositions of other political actors.

Individuals and states are ‘curious’ because they know or at least feel that—at any given point of time—their knowledge of the surrounding ‘world’ is inadequate. Collecting new data/information and *generating new knowledge* increases political certainty and self-assuredness. As the political world is ever-changing, new data/information turned into intelligence/knowledge are needed all the time, because existing intelligence/knowledge becomes outdated or even obsolete. One’s knowledge about the surrounding world has to be constantly ‘up to date’. This type of knowledge and knowledge generation, Kent calls, is “*current-reportorial intelligence*” or simply “current intelligence”. The core quality current-reportorial intelligence is “a high capacity to detect the significant and a *high sensitivity to changes*.”<sup>52</sup> That means “spotting the unusual, the really unusual”, identifying “the three things per week of the thousands it observes and the millions that happen which are really of potential moment.”<sup>53</sup> “As the

reporting element carries out its task it constantly adds freshness to the content of the basic descriptive element. It does more than this, for in keeping otherwise static knowledge up-to-date it maintains a bridge between the descriptive and what I have called the speculative-evaluative elements—a bridge between past and future.”<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the *Arthaśāstra*, Kauṭīliya tells us that there is no standstill in the political world. *Change is what is constant in politics*. States always go into a certain direction: they may drift towards weakness or march towards strength: “decline, stability and advancement”.<sup>55</sup> States may stagnate, but it would not take long before decline or ascend becomes discernible. There are no permanent friends, foes or neutrals. Interstate relations are fluid: today’s friend is tomorrow’s enemy and vice versa. Kauṭīliya insists that the ruler must know about the changes in the political situation, preferably before they have fully manifested themselves. “He, who is well versed in the science of politics, should employ all the means, viz. advancement, decline and stable condition as well as weakening and extermination.”<sup>56</sup>

## Intelligence and Political Science

We have noted above that, in Kauṭīliya’s view, the knowledge required for statecraft has to be both substantive in content and scientific in method. As intelligence is an integral and essential component of the knowledge underpinning statecraft, the question arises what is the relationship of intelligence, i.e. intelligence analysis and assessment—to science.

Let’s first take an *e contrario* approach to the relationship between science and intelligence. The lack of knowledge—both in terms of aggregated data/information and scientific method—means being thrown back on ‘gut feelings’, ‘hunches’ or *magic* when engaging in foreign policy. The uneducated ruler disinterested in intelligence is inclined to base his assessment of the situation and strategic planning on some miraculous personal aptitude or magical powers: astrology, oracles, omen or fatum. Magical ‘data’ and rituals are apt to take the place of intelligence. The secular Kauṭīliya takes an indifferent (but also instrumental) attitude towards magic (and religious issues generally). He who believes in magic might do

so, but *magic should not be mixed up with intelligence* and strategic planning.<sup>57</sup> If we look at ancient Greece and Rome, we see how closely magic and strategic planning were interwoven in foreign policy and warfare. So, Kautilya draws a demarcation line between intelligence and statecraft on the one side and magic on the other: “The object slips away from the foolish person, who continuously consults the stars.”<sup>58</sup>

The very first step in the intelligence cycle—collecting information—already means a turning away from magic. For Kautilya, it is of decisive importance to gain *reliable empirical data* and *reality-based information* about the capabilities and intentions of other political actors. For him, intelligence and statecraft have to be based on factual data/information. It is intelligence versus magic.

The mere collection of factual information or data, however, does *not* tell one ‘what’s going on’. Nor does an aggregate of such data/information in itself constitute intelligence: “Facts don’t speak for themselves”—rare exceptions merely confirm the rule.<sup>59</sup> The (collected) information has to be analysed—and “analysis, by definition, means *going beyond the facts*.”<sup>60</sup> It is through analysis that ‘raw’ data are turned into intelligence. In order to generate the knowledge needed for effective statecraft, information or data have to be cognitively processed according to certain methodological—at minimum logical—principles. That is true even for ‘common sense’ knowledge, albeit with rather lax and semiconscious methodological standards. Scientifically valid knowledge is generated by *cognitively processing information or data applying strict and testable methodological standards as well as verifiable theoretical concepts in a coherent setting*.

Kautilya states that in the realm of statecraft there are three types of knowledge:<sup>61</sup>

- a) *immediate knowledge* based on what the ruler himself sees and hears.
- b) *mediated, indirect knowledge* based on what the ruler is being told by ministers, spies, diplomats or other ‘experts’ about occurrences which are distant in space and time, i.e. *intelligence and the product of intelligence analysis*.
- c) *knowledge inferred* from immediate and mediated knowledge with

respect to future developments and the ruler's own intended actions, i.e. *intelligence assessments and estimates*. "Forming an idea of what has not [yet] been done from what is [has been] done in respect of undertakings is inferred."<sup>62</sup>

This statement about the three variants of knowledge in statecraft in the *Arthaśāstra* is most significant with respect to the *methodology* of intelligence analysis, assessment and estimates as well as strategic planning. First, Kauṭīliya tells us that the ruler does depend on *exogenous sources of knowledge*—others collect information and disseminate intelligence to him. We see here a quite important parallel between political intelligence and science: neither the ruler (with his political/intelligence advisers) nor the scientist can be 'self-sufficient'. In both fields, there cannot be an autarchy of knowledge: "Rulership can be successfully carried out only with the help of associates. One wheel alone does not turn. Therefore, he should appoint ministers and listen to their opinion";<sup>63</sup> and, "Indra indeed has a council of ministers consisting of a thousand sages. He has that as his eye. Therefore, they call him 'the thousand-eyed one', though he is two-eyed."<sup>64</sup> Without intelligence, the ruler, i.e. the state—is blind in terms of statecraft.

Secondly, Kauṭīliya emphatically argues that all three types of political knowledge need to be deliberated in conclave with his close advisers. The incoming information must be reviewed. Is it reliable? Only, "when there is agreement in the reports of three spies, credence should be given."<sup>65</sup> But that is only the baseline criteria of reliability of intelligence reports and as such insufficient for intelligence analysis and assessments. Kauṭīliya insists that adequate analysis of intelligence reports depends on *collective deliberation*. And he consistently and vehemently rejects 'lonely decisions' of the ruler. Instead, he should consult with advisers and "should ascertain their different opinions along with their reasons for holding them".<sup>66</sup> Thus, with respect to intelligence analysis, assessments, estimates and strategic planning, we see here an exposition that reminds us of the principle of a Socratic dialogue or Platonic discourse. Or, the other way round, Kauṭīliya demands with respect to intelligence and strategic planning the exact opposite of what Kent calls an actor's autistic "communion with his intuitive self".<sup>67</sup>

For Kauṭilya, statecraft is more than a ‘craft’. The ruler’s talent, experience and intuition do not suffice for assuring the maintenance and expansion of the power of the state and the welfare of the people. The knowledge on which statecraft has to be based must have scientific character. This is quite relevant for Kauṭilya’s understanding of intelligence as a key component of statecraft. The knowledge underpinning statecraft is (significantly) derived from intelligence—more precisely from intelligence analysis and assessments. Ergo, intelligence analysis and assessments must apply strict methodological standards as well as verifiable theoretical concepts. In other words, there is an intrinsic relation between intelligence analysis/assessment and political science (and also other science branches). *It is through political science that information gets transformed into intelligence.*

We first take up the *methodological* principles of political science set forth by Kauṭilya in the *Arthaśāstra* and turn to his *theoretical* concepts of political science in the next paragraph. Both are of critical importance for Kauṭilya’s understanding of intelligence and intelligence analysis.

For Kauṭilya, philosophy is the ordering principle of political science. He defines philosophy as the science of the realistic, logical-rational cognition articulated in the ancient Indian philosophy schools of *sāṃkhya*, *yoga* and *lokāyata*. “Philosophy is ever thought of as the lamp of all sciences, as the means of all actions and as the support of all laws and duties.”<sup>68</sup> Structured by philosophy, political science can empirically verify its validity by facilitating the maintenance and growth of the power of the state and the welfare of the people.

“A king knowing the science of politics, acquiring in this manner an ally, money and land with men and without men, over-reaches the confederates.”<sup>69</sup> But, a ruler “deviating from the science, with his mind firmly fixed on what is contrary to science, ruins the kingdom and himself.”<sup>70</sup>

Kauṭilya views his *Arthaśāstra* as *the* foundational work of political science transcending qualitatively all previous texts of this subject area: “Easy to learn and to understand, precise in doctrine, sense and word, free from prolixity of text, thus has this (work on the) Science been composed

by Kauṭīliya.”<sup>71</sup> In Book XV of the *Arthaśāstra*, Kauṭīliya expounds the methodological principles that give his work scientific quality. In this book, *The Methods of the Science*, he outlines 32 methodological categories.<sup>72</sup> Among these categories, one can distinguish four category clusters which, I think, have a particular methodological significance:

### **1st Category Cluster: *The Principle of Causality***

- \_ proof: explanation of the cause of a thing<sup>73</sup>
- \_ comprehensive explanation: statement of several causes converging in effecting a thing<sup>74</sup>
- \_ differentiated explanation: statement of the different factors that are causing a thing<sup>75</sup>
- \_ *e contrario* explanation: explaining a thing by its opposite<sup>76</sup>

### **2nd Category Cluster: *Preliminary Explanations***

- \_ point of doubt: conflicting explanations for the cause of a thing<sup>77</sup>
- \_ analogy: explanation of a thing not yet understood by a fact of experience<sup>78</sup>
- \_ adoption: accepting the assessment of a thing by another author<sup>79</sup>
- \_ restriction: reference to exceptions to a rule<sup>80</sup>

### **3rd Category Cluster: *Explanations and Conclusions***

- \_ necessity: logically and factually only possible conclusion from the data<sup>81</sup>
- \_ alternative: mutually exclusive conclusions from the data—either/or<sup>82</sup>
- \_ combination: multiple, coexisting conclusions from the data—as well as<sup>83</sup>

### **4th Category: *Inference and Prognostics***

- \_ inferring from empirical data prognostic conclusions<sup>84</sup>

If Kauṭilyan statecraft is based on political science and intelligence is a vital component of statecraft then the methodological principles of political science are necessarily applicable to (and mandatory for) intelligence analysis. Among statecraft, political science and intelligence exists an intrinsic connectivity. That means that the methodological category clusters of causality, preliminary explanation and conclusion are to be applied to the discursive analysis/assessment of incoming intelligence data. And the same goes for the methodological category of inference. Therefore, *the scientific methodology laid down in Book XV of the Arthaśāstra must also be applied to intelligence analysis, assessments, estimates and strategic planning.*

However, it is *not only* Book XV of the *Arthaśāstra* that is methodologically relevant for intelligence assessment and strategic planning. The methodology of political science which has to be applied in discursive intelligence analysis and strategic planning must not be limited to the methodological ‘instruments’ and categories (of Book XV) but must be oriented on the *methodological structure of the Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra as a whole.*

“Just as a person not learned in the Veda does not deserve to eat the *sraddha*-meal of good persons, so a king who has not learned the teaching of the science of politics is unfit to listen to counsel.”<sup>85</sup> Meyer’s translation is: he who has not studied “this *śāstra*”—Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*—is unfit for the discourse of statecraft. In other words, intelligence analysis, assessments and estimates following the methodology of Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra* are the precondition of strategic planning and effective statecraft.

The methodological principle with which Kauṭilya composes and structures the *Arthaśāstra*, is a *holistic* and *comprehensive* approach: matters of domestic as well as foreign policy have to be seen in their connectivity with economic, technological, fiscal, administrative, judicial and military affairs. Kauṭilya seems intent to avoid a selective, reductionist approach to the state and statecraft in which there is a one-sided focus on one or two elements while neglecting the rest. Consequently, the full-spectrum approach—as typified by the *Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra* as the ideal-type textbook of political science—must also be adopted for intelligence analysis,

assessment and estimates. When making an intelligence assessment of a foreign actor, not just one or two power factors—for example, military strength alone—must be considered. Both material and non-material factors need to be taken into account. For example: A state has large peasant population and much fertile land, but excessive taxation by the state is depressing agricultural output and impoverishing the farmers. An inefficient and corrupt state bureaucracy can paralyse the apparent military strength of state. Therefore, the (intelligence) assessment of the situation must be based on the ‘total picture’ of a state’s resources and capabilities.<sup>86</sup>

Here we come back to the homology between Kauṭilya’s and Kent’s understanding of intelligence, particularly its cognitive dimension of analysis and assessment. Intelligence analysis requires “the best professional training, the highest intellectual integrity and a very large amount of worldly wisdom.”<sup>87</sup> Of the intelligence analyst, Kent says: “The job of synthesis upon which he is embarking is one which requires of him *the very highest competence in one or more of the sciences of politics, economics, geography, and the military art*. He [the intelligence analyst] should not undertake it unless he has an easy familiarity with the literature and techniques of the relevant disciplines.”<sup>88</sup> And: “In a sense, intelligence organizations must be not a little *like a large university faculty*. They must have the people to whom research and rigorous thought are the breath of life, and they must accordingly have tolerance for the queer bird and the eccentric with a unique talent. They must guarantee a sort of academic freedom of inquiry and must fight off those who derogate such freedom by pointing to its occasional crackpot findings.”<sup>89</sup>

Like Kauṭilya, long before him, Kent pays close attention to the question of methodology in intelligence analysis and assessment. “‘Formulation of the method’, [as] it would be called in formal terms, is itself an act of intelligence and an essential part of the whole intelligence process.”<sup>90</sup> And: “The knowledge at issue is produced by the process of research [...] a certain kind of research must accompany the surveillance activity. This *research is a systematic endeavour to get firm meaning out of impressions*. Surveillance without its accompanying research will produce spotty and superficial information... [R]esearch is the only process which we of the liberal tradition are willing to admit is capable of giving us the truth, or a

closer approximation to truth than we now enjoy. [...] truth is to be approached, if not attained, through *research guided by systematic method*. In the social sciences which very largely constitute the subject matter of strategic intelligence, there is such a method, it is much like the method of physical sciences. It is not the same method but it is a method none the less.”<sup>91</sup> And on the inference problematic, Kent states: “Are so called ‘estimates’ of intelligence of any value? My answer is Yes, they are of very great value if they are soundly based in reliable descriptive data, reliable reporting, and processed from careful analysis.”<sup>92</sup> The basic idea underlying this sentence by Kent has been expressed by Kautilya some 2300 years earlier.

In conclusion of this part, we need to re-emphasise the fact that Kautilya’s understanding of statecraft and intelligence, while being methodologically and theoretically based upon political science, is *firmly grounded in empirical experience*. Kautilya himself says that he wrote the *Arthaśāstra* “after going through all the sciences in detail *and after observing the practice*.”<sup>93</sup> The Kautilyan state, while being an ideal-type theoretical construction, is not a utopian construction in the sense of Thomas Morus or Campanella. Kautilya does know the empirical reality of intelligence and he analyses and conceptualises this reality with scientific methodology.

## **Kautilya’s Theoretical Instruments for Intelligence Analysis: The *Saptānga* Theory**

We now turn from the methodological side of intelligence analysis to *theoretical* concepts in the *Arthaśāstra* that are applicable for intelligence analysis and assessment. One of the two basic questions in intelligence analysis is about *capabilities* of states—those of foreign states, but also one’s own (in relation to others). The second question is about the *intentions* of competitors and adversaries. How do we identify state capabilities and how do we operationalise them in terms of relative strength or weakness? If we use the terminology of Hans J. Morgenthau, we would say: What is the “*national power*”—the material and immaterial resources of a state?

Kautilya had the idea of “national power” 2300 years ago with the

*saptāṅga* theory: The seven “state factors (*prakṛti*)” constitute (state) power: “The king and his rule [state], this is the sum-total of the constituents.”<sup>94</sup> The seven “constituent elements of the state” (Kangle) or seven “state factors” (Meyer) are:

- 1) *swāmī*: the ruler; 2) *amātya*: the Minister [government and administration]; 3) *janapada*: the people [in the countryside]; 4) *durga*: the fortress [capital]; 5) *koṣa*: the treasury [economy]; 6) *daṇḍa*: armed might; 7) *mitra*: the ally [in foreign policy].<sup>95</sup>

With the *saptāṅga* theory, Kauṭīliya transcends the idea that state power is primarily defined by armed might. The state is no longer defined solely by its monopoly of the use of force. Beyond *daṇḍa*, the state has six other power factors at its disposal. How powerful a state is, is determined by the status (and the development trend) of *all* the seven *prakṛitis*. This new understanding of state power is one of the outstanding theoretical achievements in the *Arthaśāstra*.

Moreover, Kauṭīliya’s *saptāṅga* theory means that state power is no longer an abstract, relational magnitude, but an *aggregate* of material and immaterial variables. Simultaneously, state power can be operationalised by breaking it down into its seven components.<sup>96</sup> Thus, state power can, if not precisely measured, at least be adequately evaluated and estimated. That includes assessing the positive or negative *development trends* of each of the seven *prakṛiti*: *decline*, *rise* or *stagnation*.<sup>97</sup>

For example *janapada*: how many peasants produce what agricultural output, what is their surplus product, what tax revenue do they generate; what mines do produce what output of what type of ore; what is timber production; etc.? Is the trend of these economic indices positive or negative? The state factor *amātya* can be evaluated using qualitative criteria: administrative competence, efficiency, or level of corruption of the state bureaucracy. What is the size of the armed forces, in what condition are weapons systems, equipment, logistics or combat morale? So Kauṭīliya provides a *substantive concept of state power*, which is comprehensive as well as differentiated in itself. The seven *prakṛitis* are logically and practically interrelated and their sequence constitutes a *hierarchy* of importance in the sense that the higher-order state factor determines the

performance of successive factors. This is important to avoid an over-fixation and over-estimation of one or two state factors in assessing state power, i.e. ignoring their quasi-genetic dependency on other state factors.

As mentioned above, Kauṭilya's concept of state power as the aggregate of the seven state factors is homologous with Morgenthau's concept of "national power" whose components are population size, raw materials, agriculture, industrial potential and the armed forces of a state. Morgenthau also includes immaterial factors to "national power", that is "national character", "national morality" and the "quality" of government and diplomacy.<sup>98</sup>

Kauṭilya's concept of state power as an aggregate of seven *prakṛtis* provides excellent *theoretical tools for intelligence analysis*. The assessment of the situation with respect to one's own state and foreign states can rest on *objective parameters*: the given status and the development trend of the seven *prakṛtis*. Thus, Kauṭilya rendered possible not only a theoretical quantum leap in political science, but equally so for intelligence analysis. *The intelligence assessment of state capabilities can be based on substantive, objective criteria.*

The power of a state is determined by the totality and the connectivity of the seven *prakṛtis*. When we look at the power potential of state we may find that the military power factor of this state appears to be very strong: its armed forces are quantitatively large. But intelligence analysis may uncover that this same state is rather weak in economic power and financial resources which translates into missing pay, low-grade equipment and insufficient supplies—atrophying the army's combat power. Conversely, a territorially and demographically small state with modest armed forces might become a powerful state in a relatively short time span. That can happen if the state factors *swāmī* and *amātya* are of excellent quality, which means promoting and expanding the economy in the countryside (*janapada*) and in the city (*durga*) thus increasing tax revenues (*koṣa*) allowing the armed forces to be upgraded (*daṇḍa*) and conducting a wise foreign policy (*amātya*).

Kauṭilya is not only interested in the given status of a state's *prakṛtis*, but the trend of their development. The status of the *prakṛtis* is fluid: they

can grow and improve or they can deteriorate. A state's power potential might stagnate for a while, but sooner than later it will either increase or shrink. Identifying *the trend of a state's power potential* is a central task of intelligence analysis and assessment. The directionality of five of one's own state factors can be determined or at least be influenced by the ruler and the state administration: *janapada*, *durga*, *koṣa*, *daṇḍa* and *mitra*. For Kauṭīliya, the *optimisation* of one's *prakṛti* is *raison d'etat*.<sup>99</sup> In other words, priority is to be given to “*internal balancing*” via the strengthening and improvement of the seven state factors.

For an objective assessment of one's own *prakṛti*, the secret service is not needed because in the Kauṭīliyan state there is a comprehensive census system. The state bureaucracy collects and documents the demographic, economic, fiscal and other data. Thus, the state factors *janapanda*, *durga*, *koṣa* and *daṇḍa* can be estimated fairly accurately. For evaluating the quality of the state bureaucracy, however, Kauṭīliya advises the ruler to use the secret service. Kauṭīliyan statecraft requires that the ruler must judge soberly and self-critically his own performance, particularly with respect to foreign policy. Whatever result the assessment of the given status of one's own *prakṛti* may yield, Kauṭīliya insists: they must be strengthened and improved—that is demanded by *raison d'etat*.

To assess the capabilities—and intentions of—foreign states, intelligence is indispensable. Intelligence operatives and diplomatic envoys (which are supposed to work closely together) are needed. They must collect as much data/information as possible on the current status and trend of the *prakṛtis* of the foreign state in which they are operating. Doing that does not necessarily mean clandestine intelligence collection. Much information about the political, economic and even the military situation of a foreign country can be collected by diplomats and intelligence operatives keeping their eyes open and by talking to both ordinary people and senior officials. However, collecting *secret political and/or military information*, particularly about intentions of competitors/adversaries, necessitates the recruitment of local agents by one's own intelligence operatives—the higher their position in the political and social system the better will be the intelligence they yield—as well as other methods of clandestine collection. Kauṭīliya describes rather extensively how secret agents and diplomats can collect open and

secret intelligence in a foreign country.<sup>100</sup> Their intelligence reports then must be analysed and assessed at home with the methodology sketched above and with the theoretical tools provided by the *saptāṅga* theory. Doing that allows a realistic and objective assessment of the status and the development trend of each *prakṛti* and the aggregated power potential of foreign states. Thus, an *objective assessment of the correlation of forces* between one's own state and competing states becomes possible.

So, Kautilya offers not only the methodological but also the theoretical framework for sober and unbiased intelligence analysis and assessment. *Again, science and intelligence form a symbiosis.*

## Intelligence Analysis and Grand Strategy

The term grand strategy was coined by B.H. Liddell Hart.<sup>101</sup> His understanding of grand strategy can be summarised as follows: grand strategy is the 'holistic' or 'synoptic' alignment of strategic thinking on the overall constellation of the political, social, economic and military resources available to a state directed towards the realisation of fundamental state goals. That is precisely the approach taken by Kautilya in the *Arthaśāstra*. Grand strategy means that strategic thinking and action is aimed to bring about a *context-adequate, optimal mix of a state's capabilities for the realisation of 'strategic' state interests and goals*. Like intelligence, grand strategy is both a cognitive process and the result of this process—a 'master plan' for state action which is co-relating the 'estimate of the (strategic) situation' with state interests and goals.<sup>102</sup>

The concept of grand strategy is very close to Kautilya's holistic and synoptic idea of statecraft. The components of grand strategy can rather easily be identified in the *Arthaśāstra*:

- resources and *capabilities* in terms of the seven *prakṛtis*.
- *power potential* in terms of the aggregated *prakṛtis*.
- the *correlation of forces* in terms of *prakṛtis*—one's own and that of competitors/adversaries.
- *state interests* derived from a) the correlation of forces and b) the actors' respective intentions.
- '*strategic*' and *normative state goals* in accordance with *raison*

*d'etat*: the maintenance and expansion of the power of the state, the welfare of the people and the political unification of the Indian subcontinent.

The *necessary condition* of the possibility of designing a grand strategy is intelligence analysis and estimates. The foundation of grand strategy is the analysis and assessment of one's own resources and capabilities on the one side and the capabilities and intentions of external actors on the other side. The result is an 'estimate of the situation' the bottom of which is the correlation of forces between states: "ascertaining the relative strength or weakness of powers", as Kauṭīliya puts it.<sup>103</sup> The concept of correlation of forces is central in the *Arthaśāstra* and the *saptāṅga* theory makes it so expedient by establishing substantive and objective criteria for intelligence analysis and assessment. Through the intelligence assessment of the correlation of forces, *a reality-based identification of state interests* becomes possible. But that is not all. The correlation of forces between states is linked by Kauṭīliya with *strategic planning*: "The circle of constituent elements [the seven *prakṛtis*] is the basis of the six measures of foreign policy [*ṣāḍguṇya*]." <sup>104</sup>

Depending first and foremost on the assessment of the correlation of forces (in terms of the respective *prakṛti*), Kauṭīliya submits a set of *six action strategies in foreign policy (ṣāḍguṇya)* for enforcing one's state interests and realising one's state goals:

1. *saṃdhi* (peace): the rival state is stronger and will remain so in the foreseeable future.
2. *vigraha* (war): the rival is vastly inferior in power.
3. *āsana* (neutrality): the correlation of forces is balanced.
4. *yāna* (war preparation, coercive diplomacy): one's own power is rising *vis-a-vis* the rival state.
5. *saṃśraya* (alliance building): the rival state's power is rising faster than one's own.
6. *dvaiddhībhāva* (diplomatic double game): the constellation among rivals and allies is very fluid.

"These are really six measures, because of differences in the situation',

say[s] Kauṭilya.”<sup>105</sup> What is of critical importance with respect to the *ṣādguṇya* theory is its intrinsic connectivity with the *saptāṅga* theory. The *saptāṅga* theory provides the benchmark for the correlation of forces between rival states. And the correlation of forces *preselects, if not determines*, which of the six action strategies is to be chosen in foreign policy: “Situating within the circle of [the seven] constituent elements, he [the ruler] should, in this manner, with these six methods of [foreign] policy, seek to progress from decline to stable condition and from stable condition to advancement in his own undertakings.”<sup>106</sup> Kauṭilya wants to eliminate non-reflective, impulsive and arbitrary action in foreign policy. For him, sober, thorough and objective intelligence analysis, assessment and estimates are the *conditio sine qua non* for a foreign policy which meets his strategic and normative requirements. “He who sees the six measures of policy as being interdependent in this manner, plays, as he pleases, with the [rival] kings tied by the chains of his intellect.”<sup>107</sup>

In Kauṭilya’s understanding, intelligence analysis, assessment and estimates go hand in hand with strategic planning and open up the access route that leads to conceptualising a grand strategy which defines *the ways and means by which interests can be enforced and goals can be achieved*.

Kauṭilya may not be the first author to write about intelligence matters in a scholarly fashion, but he is certainly the first to do so in a systematic, comprehensive and in-depth manner. Kauṭilya views intelligence as an integral part of statecraft—and not merely as the trade of spying. The *Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra* is unquestionably *a foundational text of the political science sub-discipline, Intelligence Studies*—but as such, it has been largely ignored. Kauṭilya has left a large reservoir of ideas and concepts with respect to intelligence affairs which has so far remained untapped for tackling problems and puzzles of contemporary Intelligence Studies. One would hope this observation will soon become obsolete.

## NOTES

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4. Adda B. Bozeman, *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft*, Brassey's, Washington, 1992, pp. 1f.
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  6. In 2012, Col. P.K. Gautam (Retd.), IDSA Research Fellow, raised the question of intelligence analysis in the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra* in the context of the IDSA Project *Indigenous Historical Knowledge*. See: P.K. Gautam, *One Hundred Years of Kautilya's Arthashastra*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA Monograph Series), Delhi, 2013, available at <http://idsa.in/monograph/OneHundredYearsofKautilyasArthashastra> (Accessed on September 4, 2013).
  7. See: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*, Mohr/UTB, Tübingen, 1988.
  8. Helmuth Plessner, *Macht und menschliche Natur*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2003, p. 217. Note: Helmuth Plessner (1892-1985) was a German-Jewish sociologist and social philosopher. His 1931 study *Macht und menschliche Natur* [Power and Human Nature] has not yet been translated into English.
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  10. See: Jack Davis, *Sherman Kent and the Profession of Intelligence Analysis*, The Sherman Kent Center for Intelligence Analysis, Occasional Papers 1/5, 2002. Online <https://www.cia.gov/library/kent-center-occasional-papers/vol1no5.htm> (Accessed on March 2, 2014).
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  14. *Ibid.*, pp. 292-296, [5.1].
  15. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 28, [1.12.18, 1.13.2].
  16. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 422-426, 481-485, [1.12.19, 9.6, 13.3].
  17. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 36-39, 454-459, [1.12.20, 1.16, 11.1].
  18. *Ibid.*
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  21. See: Ludwig Fritze (Hg.), *Mudrarakschasa oder des Kanzlers Siegelring: Ein indisches Drama von Visakhadatta*, Reclam, Leipzig, 1886.
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  23. *Ibid.*
  24. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32, [1.14].
  25. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-29, [1.12-13].
  26. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-27, [1.12].
  27. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-39, 454-459, 460-469, 474-481, [1.16, 11.1, 12.1-4, 13.1-2].
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  29. Adda B. Bozeman, note 4, p. 1.
  30. *Ibid.*, VII, e.a.
  31. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 319.
  32. *Ibid.*, p. 407, [9.1.15].
  33. See: Bowman H. Miller, "Improving All-Source Intelligence Analysis: Elevate Knowledge in the Equation", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 21(2), 2008, p. 338.
  34. R.P. Kangle, note 1, pp. 10-11, [1.5].
  35. *Ibid.*, p. 46, [1.19.7-17].
  36. Kangle uses alternatively the terms "knowledge", "intellect", science" and "political science".
  37. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 10, [1.5.5].
  38. *Ibid.*, p. 11, [1.5.15-16]; restated almost verbatim on p. 314, [6.1.4].
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 12, [1.6.2-3].

40. *Ibid.*, p. 2, [1.1.5].
41. *Ibid.*, p. 11, [1.5.11].
42. *Ibid.*, p. 13, [1.7.1], e.a.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 46, [1.19.7-14].
44. *Ibid.*, p. 11, [1.5.17].
45. Sherman Kent, note 9, pp. VIIff, e.a.
46. Stephan Marrin, "Intelligence Analysis Theory: Explaining and Predicting Analytic Responsibilities", *Intelligence and National Security*, 22(6), 2007, p. 827. e.a.
47. Sherman Kent, note 9, p. 76. e.a.
48. R.P. Kangle, note 1, pp. 10, 28-29, [1.4.13-14, 1.13.2-14].
49. Adda B. Bozeman, note 4, p. 2.
50. R.P. Kangle, note 1, pp. 36-39, [1.16].
51. Sherman Kent, note 9, p. 4.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 70. e.a.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
55. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 317, [6.2.4].
56. *Ibid.*, p. 384, [7.18.43].
57. However, magic can be used as a means of psychological warfare by the ruler possessing knowledge cum intelligence.
58. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 419, [9.4.26].
59. Bowman H. Miller, note 33, p. 344.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 345. e.a.
61. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 17, [1.9.4-8].
62. *Ibid.*, [1.9.7].
63. *Ibid.*, p. 14, [1.7.9].
64. *Ibid.*, p. 36, [1.15.55-57].
65. *Ibid.*, p. 26, [1.12.15].
66. *Ibid.*, p. 34, [1.15.35].
67. Sherman Kent, note 9, p. 156.
68. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 7, [1.2.12].
69. *Ibid.*, p. 358, [7.11.45].
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 391-392, [8.2.12].
71. *Ibid.*, p. 5, [1.1.19].
72. I follow J.J. Meyer's German translation which here, I think, is less opaque than Kangle's; [15.1.3].
73. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 512, [15.1.5].
74. *Ibid.*, p. 513, [15.1.6].
75. *Ibid.*, [15.1.7].
76. *Ibid.*, [15.1.16].
77. *Ibid.*, [15.1.14].
78. *Ibid.*, [15.1.12].
79. *Ibid.*, [15.1.18].
80. *Ibid.*, [15.1.22].

81. *Ibid.*, p. 514, [15.1.29].
82. *Ibid.*, [15.1.30].
83. *Ibid.*, [15.1.31].
84. *Ibid.*, [15.1.32].
85. *Ibid.*, p. 36, [1.15.61].
86. The *Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra*'s holistic approach to statecraft and intelligence marks a major difference to the other great ancient work on this subject area, i.e. Sun-Tzu's *The Art of War*. See: K.N. Ramachandran, "Sun Zi and Kautilya: Towards a Comparative Analysis", in K.N. Ramachandran et. al., in *Sun Zi and China's Strategic Culture*, IDSA, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 46-78.
87. Sherman Kent, note 9, p. 64.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 48. e.a.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 74. e.a.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-156, e.a.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
93. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 96, [2.10.63], e.a.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 390, [8.2.1].
95. *Ibid.*, p. 314, [6.1.1].
96. See: Michael Liebig, "Kautilya's Relevance for India Today", *India Quarterly*, 69(2), 2013, pp. 99-116.
97. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 884, [7.18.43].
98. See: Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1978, pp. 107-170.
99. See: Michael Liebig, note 96; *Endogene Politisch-Kulturelle Ressourcen – Der Relevanz des Kautilya-Arthashastra für das moderne Indien*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2014.
100. R.P. Kangle, note 1, pp. 36-39, [1.16].
101. B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1967, p. 322.
102. See: Kovac, Mitar and Jan Marcek, "Konzepte und Methodische Aspekte der Formulierung und Umsetzung der Staatlichen Strategie", in *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, 51(1), 2013, pp. 34-47.
103. R.P. Kangle, note 1, p. 406, [9.1.1].
104. *Ibid.*, p. 321, [7.1.1].
105. *Ibid.*, [7.1.5].
106. *Ibid.*, p. 324, [7.1.38].
107. *Ibid.*, p. 384, [7.18.44].

# 4

## The Army: Then and Now

*Pradeep Kumar Gautam*

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### **Introduction**

The composition of an army and its employment is described in detail in the text of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (KA). If one studies the composition and employment as given in the KA, it is possible to relate to a number of norms and traditions that are extant including important aspects of civil military relations. The KA, however, mentions a different order of priority in the type or hierarchy of troops within the army when compared with the Chola army of South India. South India also had well-established system of military academies. Not much literature exists on them, but the hypothesis is that multidisciplinary research on text may make it possible to reconstruct the essentials as to why there were some differences in north and south. Allocation of troops to task demands a good understanding of troop characteristics and capabilities. Extracting sutras from the text as it relates to forest troops can help conceptualise some unique operational or tactical ideas from KA. In a society such as India, which is multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious, the military reflects the society. From the text of the KA a similar narrative can be seen and the paper discusses the professional need to know the troops. On matters related to

the morale and some non-material issues KA also provides a window for contemporary times for its enduring relevance today.

This paper will first explain the composition of the Kautilyan army and compare it with that of the Cholas. How troops are to be employed, as mentioned in the text, will then be compared for contemporary times. I allude toward some foreign armies and then conclude by addressing some morale and non-material issues.

## Composition of the Army

The composition of an army gives a good indication of the society. The Mauryan Empire was famous for its large standing army. Plutarch records that Chandragupta Maurya overran India with 600,000 men.<sup>1</sup> It had in its rank and files members of all sections of society including the forest dwellers (*atavi*).<sup>2</sup> More insights are possible when the composition of the army is analysed. In Kautilya's explanation, troop composition of various classes are *maulabala* (hereditary/standing army), *bhrtabala* (the hired/recruited locally for a particular occasion), *srenibala* (the banded/band of soldiers from guilds, mercenaries), *mitrabala* (troops of the ally), *amitrabala* (alien/enemy troops) and *atavibala* (forest troops/tribes such as *Sabaras*, *Pulindas* and others).<sup>3</sup> Traditional *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Sudras* were the preferred option for a standing army. The *atavibalas* were under own chief. Kangle's study mentions that the enemy and forest troops were not to be paid in regular wages but maintained with *kupya*, minor produce, or alternatively they were allowed to keep the plunder that they may get in the fighting.<sup>4</sup> *The Comprehensive History of India* refers to a class of recruits who were the *choras*, or *pratirodhakas* of the day, robbers and outlaws; the *chora-ganas* or organised gangs of brigands; the *mlechchha* tribes like *kirata* highlanders; the *atavikas*, foresters, and warrior clans called *sastropajivisrenis*.<sup>5</sup>

How was the situation in the southern India during the ancient Chola period which corresponds to the Mauryan period? Here, the class composition and inter-se priority of the ancient Chola army of south India is of great interest. In the six-fold army mentioned by Kautilya, the *atavikas*, i.e., foresters/tribesmen occupy the last position. However, in the case of

the Chola army of South India, tribesmen were integrated into regular standing army, and some of them rose to high ranks as well.<sup>6</sup> In the later Chola period, the most prominent groups among the armed forces were the *maravas* (once cattle lifting marauders), the merchant guild (*sreni* in Kautilya's list) called *kaikkola* units and defectors called *dvishad-balam* of Kautilya's list from the army of arch enemies—the Chalukya of Kalyana (11th century CE).<sup>7</sup> Two units of the Chola army were from Karnataka. Their designation in the Chola army indicates good methods of inducement by the Cholas to recruit locals from enemy territory for their military labour market.<sup>8</sup> Armies of several feudatories under each imperial dynasty were also pressed into service. The ruler of Sri Lanka, Mahinda V (1001 CE) is credited to have paid regular wages to the men of Kerala enlisted into his army.<sup>9</sup>

S.N. Prasad's account mentions that due to Kushan invasion of north India (48 CE), the persecution of Brahmins (who were also instructors in matters academic and military) was so thorough that military thinking, theorising and academics practically disappeared from north India. However, in the south, academies to provide holistic education continued well till Chola period in institutions called *ghatikas* in the Pallava region and *salais* in Kerala. But after the Chola period, these institutions went missing.<sup>10</sup> It is here that more research is required to establish whether the military traditions including the regimental and martial traditions as shown below faded away or were preserved in dispersed *gurukul* systems, oral or written traditions and folklore.

The Chola armies had regimental system like the modern army and a highly evolved war machine in its non-material and strategic segments. They had units of *kunjar* (elephant), *val* (Sword) and *vil* (archery). Other units like *kaikollar-kudirai-chchevakar* (cavalry of the *kaikollar* caste/tribe) were named after their caste composition. For ease of understanding and relationship to modern times, S.N. Prasad compares their name to the present Maratha Light Infantry.<sup>11</sup> In the infantry, the *velaikkara* groups were significant. One meaning of *velaikkara* is “those who were doing guard duty at the king's palace”. Whatever be their origin, the *velaikkara* units proved themselves so reliable a fighting force that it was some of those units that were entrusted to do garrison duty in turbulent Sri Lanka.<sup>12</sup> The

*velaikkara* troops had so well impressed the ruler of Sri Lanka by their efficiency that they were eager to induct them into their army when the garrisons of Cholas in Sri Lanka were left in the lurch by the later Cholas who could not reinforce them.<sup>13</sup> *Vellaikkara* troops and reinforcement were stationed in Sri Lanka by Rajaraja I/Rajendra I up to time of Virarajendra (1063-69 CE). By the time Kulottunga I ascended the Chola throne, reinforcements to Sri Lanka dwindled and the *vellaikkara* contingent in Sri Lanka were ultimately overwhelmed by Sri Lankan armies.

## Training

The Pallavas set up *ghatikas* to impart vedic and military training. A study of the Parthivasekharapuram inscription (ninth century) shows that the *ghatikas* were the model for the setting up of *salais* as described in the inscription in Kerala. This *salai* was set up as an institution to house vedic scholars, who were also trained in the affairs of the government in three *rajyas* (apparently of the Chera, Chola and Pandya). According to inscriptions of the 9th century CE, training included military training. The institution of *ghatika* seems to have continued into Chola period also, with the name Tamilised to *kadigai*. Several personages during the Chola period added *kadigai-marayan* (the great lord of the *kadigai*) as their title.<sup>14</sup> Institutions called *ilaiya-val* of the *kaikkolas* for other ranks existed. *Ilaiya-vals* (junior swordsmen) seem to have been cadets in the *kaikkolas* regiment. Other terms of interest are *muttaval* (senior swordsman) who was the *valavan* (commandant or captain or *nayakan*) of a cavalry regiment.

## Type of Chola Army—Paramilitary or Regular?

Another major characteristic pointed out by historians is about the Cholas not having an institution of a permanent standing army.<sup>15</sup> Ranabir Chakravarti argues that the Chola army was neither unified nor well-organised. It was more of a militia.<sup>16</sup> What remains a puzzle is that if we assume the Chola army to be on the paramilitary or militia model then what accounts for enduring military success of the Cholas? This is one aspect which now needs more explanation by scholars. Unlike north India—which experienced hordes of invaders over centuries from the north and

the northwest—there was no mass scale threat of a foreign invasion in south India. Could this be one reason for south Indian kingdoms not resorting to a standing army like the Nandas and the Mauryas in the North? Or was it due to non-availability of funds (*kosha*) with the state?<sup>17</sup> In absence of a large regular army, could this be the reason why forest troops were not consigned to the bottom as in north India as portrayed in the *Arthashastra*? The institutions for military training as alluded earlier in south India also do not appear to be meant for a paramilitary or temporary army. They appear to indicate an organised regular army with strong institutions, though its troop strength may not have been as that of the Mauryas (six lakhs).

The question of the type of navy is clearly indicative of an institution which demands professionalism of a regular standing navy. Charles Drekmeier is correct when he states that “It appears that the Cholas were the only Indian state to develop a regular navy and make it an effective instrument of military policy.”<sup>18</sup>

Cholas also undertook the maritime expeditions to Southeast Asia with a long-range view of minimising the role of Srivijay as the intermediary between the Cholas and the Sung dynasty in China.<sup>19</sup> However, one unresolved issue remained that who were the marines or naval infantry troops that made Chola conquest of Srivijaya Kingdom possible? Historians have made no mention of troop composition of maritime expeditions of Cholas and their conquest of Maldives, some islands in the Andaman and Nicobar Island chains and other regions of Southeast Asia of the Srivijay kingdom. I have similarly failed to find any satisfactory source so far. In my discussions with some knowledgeable officers, hailing from south India, I could infer that employment of Brahmin troops was out of the question. They hypothesise that possibly the coastal fishermen community were the marines who did the fighting on landing. If this be the case, then it is incorrect to assume the Chola army as a temporary paramilitary or militia model. Beach landing and fighting is serious business demanding high degree of professional competence and training. We leave this research puzzle aside and focus on the heterogeneous mix.

## Recovering Lost Traditions from South India

If we see the composition of the Chola army and go back to Kautilyan times of Mauryan Empire, we find that Indian society was very heterogeneous. This phenomenon is common and has not changed much. Policy-makers, scholars and society have to be mindful of this. This makes the study of the military an important parameter of nation-building. More so it is clear that there were very rich traditions in training of the military. It is important that we do more research from text, archeology and oral traditions.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps how was strategic planning done and diplomacy or war executed may be an exciting area of this new inquiry. Research is required to establish whether the military traditions including the regimental and martial traditions faded away or were preserved in dispersed *gurukul* systems, oral or written traditions, folklore and performing art. The work of scholars should now attempt to reverse what S.N. Prasad had observed, that is: “military history of South India remains unexplored”. But surely there is a paradox. While all manuscripts that helped scholars reconstruct the text of the *Arthashastra* was found in south India, not much reference from the text emerged in the military academies.

If the *Arthashastra* could be fixed and reconstructed nearly 100 years ago, there is a possibility for rediscovery of literature related to *ghatikas*, *salais* and *kadigai* by conducting more search for archives in south India. Annexure I to Appendix gives a snapshot of the Madras Regiment today. The area is ‘ripe’ for a rigorous scholarly work. There may also be a possibility that all issues of military matters may not be in the *Arthashastra*, though overlap may exist with other texts like the *kurals*.<sup>21</sup> According to one version of the *Vishnu Puran*, fourteen types of knowledge (*vidyas*) included the *Vedas*, *six Vedangas*, *Mimansa*, *Nyaya*, the *Puranas* and the *Dharmashastra*. Added to these, later on, were *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Sangeeta-Veda* and *Arthashastra*.<sup>22</sup> *Dhanurveda* and *Arthashastara* are treated separately and it is possible that in south India, *Dhanurveda* may have been the one which was included in the syllabus. Of course the weapon system and technology was then based on the four systems of infantry, chariots, elephants and cavalry. What is important is to research on non-material factors and how strategic, operational and tactical matters were addressed.

We leave aside this important comparison of the Kautilyan army to that of the Cholas of south India now, and focus only on the *Arthashastra* and *Kamandaki Nitisara* with the core aspects of employment of troops.

## **Understanding and the Use of Types of Troops in Text**

### *Knowing the Troops*

The Superintendent of Foot Soldiers in Section 50, Chapter 33 in Book 2, *The Activity of the Head of Departments*, under his duty has sutra 8 thus: “He should be conversant with the strength or weaknesses of hereditary, hired, banded, allied, alien and forest troops, with military operations in water, or on high ground, with open or tactical fighting, in trenches or in open, by day or by night, and with employment or absence of employment (of the foot soldiers) in (different types of) work.”<sup>23</sup>

What does this indicate? It shows the existence of a multi-ethnic society of India as is today. While today, recruitment is on an all-India basis with fair share of recruitable male population, the composition and regimental system of the Indian Army as it related to a number of regiments with troop composition of one class, fixed class or all-India mixed class in the fighting arms is institutionalised with professionalism. The appendix indicates the fascinating mix of the composition of an all-volunteer regular (*maula*) army.

Troops and also regiments have peculiar characteristics. This is even applicable today as it was in ancient times. While a common military training makes soldiers a common resource and national symbol of a democratic professional soldier, it is vital to also be conversant with unique troop characteristic of troops hailing from various parts of India. It could be said today that “Just as some troops in peace are gifted players of hockey or long distance runners, likewise for war good regimental officers need to know the natural tendencies of troops and reinforce them and at the same time make efforts to overcome any negative attributes by training and leadership for war.” The knowledge of strengths and weaknesses is a professional challenge. In his autobiography a former Chief of the Army Staff learnt (only when he joined his regiment) that the *Mahars* were aboriginal inhabitants of western and central India. They had served with distinction in Shivaji’s army and later in Bombay Native Infantry of British

India.<sup>24</sup> While the caste handbooks of the Indian Army produced by the British were meant to serve their recruiting purpose basing on the specious martial race theory and colonial anthropology, the handbooks clearly demonstrate that the need for a deep understanding of troops is vital. We may and must reject that work of imperial power but cannot have short cuts to understanding troops.

With this as background, a good example is that of the Gorkhas. Newly commissioned officers in some good units visit and tour the recruiting regions including Nepal; and continue this tradition till beyond their retirement. Likewise, it is incumbent for officers to speak the language of the troops over and above Hindustani. Being a multilingual country (as was India in the past during the times of Kautilya) this seems to be very natural. For understanding the troops, today, all regimental histories include literature on troops that is based on Indian sources and authors. The point is that officers must know their troops better than mothers knowing their children.

A new challenge, which the Indian military is dealing with aplomb, is employment of foreign troops in UN peacekeeping missions. A number of Indian military officers have or are leading these missions. A good grasp and knowledge of troop characteristic of nations and foreign troops is a professional necessity. Troops also include those of the neighbouring countries who may be performing the duties under command. In my interaction with a number of officers, I found that these officers have no problem in understanding and appreciating foreign troops from Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh in the peacekeeping mission. This should not surprise Kautilya as all countries encompass the Indian subcontinent of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

## **Employment of Troops**

“The type of troops to be mobilised is to depend on the season and the terrain, as well as on the type of troops the enemy is likely to employ in the fight. Troops to be mobilised must be such as would easily overcome the enemy's resistance”.<sup>25</sup> Book Nine is titled “The Activity of the King about to March.”<sup>26</sup> Under Chapter Two it has three sections. Section 137

from *sutra* 1 to 12 is ‘Occasions for the Employment of (The Different Kinds of) Troops’.<sup>27</sup> Ideal is to use hereditary troops. Some scenarios for hired troops is given to include shortage of regular troops, when enemy is weak, or when diplomacy is to be the strategy, and in short skirmishes hired troops are recommended. Mercenaries are best employed when opposing troops are also of bands. Similar scenarios are given for allied troops, the alien and the forest troops. Section 138 is titled ‘Merits of Equipping for War (the different kinds of troops)’ to include *sutras* 13 to 24.<sup>28</sup> The priority is given out as mentioned earlier. The first three in priority being hereditary, hired and banded. In the next three, allied come first followed by alien troops. It is mentioned that “being under the command of Aryas, alien troops are better than forest troops. These two have plunder as their objective. When there is no plunder or when there is a calamity, there might be danger from them as from a snake.”<sup>29</sup> Here, the unreliability of forest troops is given out. Kautilya argues that forest tribes are best commanded by Aryans. He means to say that in the context of his time, the leadership was of Aryans and they were the best commanders though others also could serve in the army. In *sutras* 21 to 24 he provides the essence of the military labour market. “Among *Brahmana*, *Ksatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra* troops, each earlier one is better for equipping for war than each later one, on account of superiority of spirit, say the teachers. ‘No’, says Kautilya. By prostration, an enemy may win over *Brahmana* troops. A *Ksatriya* army, trained in the art of weapons, is better, or a *Vaisya* or a *Sudra* army, when possessed of great strength.”<sup>30</sup> Kautilya, if at all he was a *Brahman* himself, was not sparing to the *Brahmans* and warned by challenging the received wisdom of the teachers by pointing out and explaining as to why *Brahmans* those days may not have made good troops.

This secular work of Kautilya, the materialist, also demolishes the incorrect idea in the understanding of the stereotypical *varna* system which stated only *kshatriya* in the ancient past and the so-called martial races, had the divine right to be soldiers.

A further study of text reveals that the ‘wild’ streak and autonomous behaviour of forest troops is also used as an advantage in combat. For example:

**(a) To Take up Defensive Positions on the Frontiers:** Book Two, The Activity of the Heads of Departments, Chapter One, Section 19 ‘Settlement of the Countryside’: It is clear that the text gives how to deploy troops (like our present-day home and hearth units of local troops in specific regions). In Sutra 5 it is stated: “On the frontiers, he should erect the fortress of frontier chiefs (as) the gates of the country, under command of frontier chiefs.”<sup>31</sup> This is sensible option otherwise troops of other region may have to be deployed. This avoids logistical and financial problems with the deployment of regular troops. In the next sutra 6 the text further gives methods of covering the gaps in defence thus: “Trappers, *Sabaras*, *Pulindas*, *Candalas*<sup>32</sup> and forest-dwellers should guard the intervening regions between them.”<sup>33</sup>

**(b) Troops in the Advance Guard:** KA has devoted many chapters to *yana* that is an advance in a campaign or military expedition which later culminates in battle of *vigraha* or *yuddha*. Kamandaka’s *Nitisara* (NS) has further improved upon KA. The *Nitisara* text, according to Upinder Singh, is situated at the threshold of or advent of the medieval early period. NS which is half-a-millennium after the time of KA continues to suggest the employment of forest troops for maximum advantage. NS suggests that troops such as *aribala* (enemy troops now fighting on behalf of the king) should always be kept engaged with difficult assignments lest they become a source of danger to the state. For forest troops, it says thus: “The foresters (*atavika bala*) should also be employed in similar task of weeding out thorns (*kantakasodhana*) in the fortified areas of enemy dominion. While entering the enemy territory they are placed in the forefront by a wise *vijigisu*.”<sup>34</sup>

**(c) Use Forest Troops When Weak in Energy:** Book 7, *The Six Measures of Foreign Policy*, Chapter 14, Section 118, ‘Recoupment of Powers that have become Weak’: “If weak in energy, he should secure the services, as they may be available, of heroic men from bands, robber-bands, foresters and *mleccha* tribes, and of secret agents capable of doing harm to enemies.”<sup>35</sup> It is clear that in recovery of power Kautilya suggests the use of forest troops.

**(d) Mobile Battle—Forest Troops in Drawing Enemy by Ruse to Ambush or Destroy Him:** In Book 10 Concerning War under Chapter

Three, Section 150 'Various Types of Covert Fighting' in Sutra 4 it is stated: "Or, feigning a rout with treasonable, alien and forest troops, he should strike the (pursuing enemy when he has) reached unsuitable ground."<sup>36</sup> R.P. Kangle, in the translation at footnote 4, explains it as "*bhangam da* has the sense of 'to make a show of being broken in ranks, to feign a rout'. Most of the *kutayuddhas* are nothing but normal tactics common on the battlefield, and there is nothing wrong about them."<sup>37</sup> Clearly, this tactics of using forest troops was a bait to enemy as part of surprise and deception, given a general perception of them not being reliable, which was often not true. This, of course, presupposes that the warring states were culturally similar and both the *vijigisu* and the *ari* had similar types of troops. This is a reasonable assumption as no foreign invasion and combat with alien troops was known to be undertaken and nor it is given as a contingency in the text.

**(e) Use of Ferocious Troops to Strike Terror:** Undoubtedly, forest chiefs must have been really troublesome to command and control like wild horses. This reputation of troops is used as an advantage. At the end of Book 10, *sutras* 48 to 50 provide methods to strike terror and the *sutra* 50 is about false reports, akin to psychological warfare, being planted, e.g. "a forest chieftain has risen (against you)"!<sup>38</sup>

After relating some examples of troop employment, I now turn to relate the situation to the present.

## Situation Today

Two things stand out. First is that the society today has become even more multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. The peopling of India is a complex subject. The appendix gives that just the armoured corps has 19 fixed or one class units and 39 all India mixed units. The infantry has 22 types of regiments consisting of a number of units or battalions mirroring democratic India today. The second is what was mentioned in the text about morale and non-material issues; and seems to be applicable even today as it relates to civil-military relations.

## Knowing and Employing Troops

As a counterfact, had General Krishna Rao not joined the famous Mahar Regiment on commissioning, his knowledge of the origin of the troops could have come much later in his military career and life. In my own case, having served with Jat Sikhs troops in 24 Medium Regiment including the 1971 war in Bangladesh and with other category other than Jat Sikhs with 1811 Light Regiment, I came to know and understand that the *Ādi Granth*, the primary scripture of the Sikhs contain the work of the first five and the ninth Sikh Gurus, four bards (Satta, Balvand, Sundar, and Mardana), eleven Bhatts (eulogists associated with Sikh court), and fifteen Bhagats ('devotees' such as Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas, Shaikh Farid, and other medieval poets of *sant*, *sufi*, and *bhakti* origin).

It must be appreciated and realised that the current regimental system at least makes military officers aware of the types of troops that they command. This sort of education is not imparted in any university in India but is learnt on job. It has been my experience that young officers soon reflect the character of the troops they command and live with. I have seen officers hailing from various parts of India become more like the Gorkhas or Sikhs or south Indians and with regimental family life and acculturation, they acquire the good traits of the troops. In the unprecedented disaster that struck the areas of Garhwal Himalayas (June 2013), it was my experience that near real time information about the condition and welfare of the people of Garhwal was communicated to me for my research to write a commentary by former retired officers of the Garhwal Rifles who belonged to the Indo-Gangetic plains and were non-Garhwalis in theory but true Garhwali 'sons of the soils'. I am certain that those officers from the all India Civil Service or Police on being allocated a "cadre" of a state likewise develop a lifelong love and respect for the people of the state they serve till they become Inspectors and Directors General or Chief Secretaries and even later in post-retirement life.

Kautilya's explanation of troop composition of various classes and peculiarities like *maulabala* (standing army), *bhrtabala* (recruited locally for particular occasion), *srenibala* (band of soldiers from guilds, mercenaries), *mitrabala* (troops of the ally), *amitrabala* (enemy troops) and

*atavibala* (forest tribes such as *Sabaras*, *Pulindas* and others)<sup>39</sup> has much in common with the composition of the Indian Army of today. As mentioned, units are one class, fixed and mixed units of the arms. There are also Territorial Army (TA) units, home and hearth battalions, para-military forces like units of Central Police Organisation under command of the army in defended sectors like the Border Security Force (BSF) or the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) on the border with Tibet. Also in practice is the use of foreign troops such as the Gorkhas from Nepal (like troops of Kerala serving in ancient Sri Lankan army). Joint operations with Mukti-Bahini in liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 is another example of *amitrabala* (enemy troops) converting into *mitrabala* (troops of the ally) as *muktijodhas*.

In counter insurgency and internal security experience, the example of Nagas fits in the text. In India, as a post-negotiation peace settlement, many surrendered Naga insurgents were absorbed in the Border Security Force (BSF) in 1973.<sup>40</sup> In using Kautilyan vocabulary further, it could be said that the Nagas were the restive forest tribes who were then made hereditary as a *maulabala* of the Indian security forces. Although the Naga troops are professionally trained and competent to be employed anywhere (one good example being in Operation Vijay at Kargil in 1999 in high mountainous altitude), those police officers who have experience in jungle terrain and counterinsurgency in Naxal areas of forested Central India report that the best constables are the Nagas as they have a natural tendency to perform better in jungle warfare. It shows that nurturing or training cannot compete with nature and this natural advantage needs to be used intelligently.

It is in the above context that Kautilya's suggestions on placing of best and weak troops in the conduct of battle are nuanced.<sup>41</sup> Allocation of troops to task cannot be a mechanical and computer-generated exercise. Human interface is important. An army unit will always claim that they are the best in any operation of war in any terrain. But the reality is that there are nuances when employing troops to task. Good generals need not be told this. In 1999 at Kargil when intrusion of Pakistani troops was detected in high altitude, it was the Ladakh Scouts that led the first ascent. They being from high altitude region were thus natural mountaineers. An example of unnecessary casualties was the use of Gorkha troops (who belong to a landlocked area and are not natural swimmers) to undertake and imitate

token amphibious landings of the type done in Second World War by Indian generals at near the end of the victorious campaign to liberate Bangladesh in 1971.

## Examples of Other Armies

**Machiavelli:** Ideas on troop composition can also be found in the work of Machiavelli based on the Italian Wars (1494-1559). It seems that Kautilyan type of ideas seem to be repeated (without the knowledge of the existence of the *Arthashastra*) in a different context by Machiavelli in *The Prince* as mercenaries and private military organisation. The wars in Italy were fought by the kings of France and Spain for mastery over Italy. One major difference in the troop composition is that Italian Wars were fought for the most part by volunteers and mercenaries.<sup>42</sup> Thus, Machiavelli basing it on his experience of the fragmented Italy comprising of city states calls mercenaries and auxiliaries as useless and dangerous.<sup>43</sup>

**Case of Afghanistan:** In wars of 21st century private security firms/contractors as those of the US in Middle East/West Asia and Afghanistan are a 'force' by themselves and here probably Machiavelli's understanding may have some relevance to current wars of occupation which is worth a research. Private security firms may have led to more problems combined with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) formations executing drone operations. Kautilyan and Chola army composition also throw light on the Afghan National Army (ANA). The ANA is now raised, equipped and trained to provide internal and external security post US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces pull out at the end of 2014. This is the largest standing army ever fielded by Afghanistan. To pay the *maulabala*, there is a need of treasury or *kosha*. The finance part may be only on foreign aid. This makes the *prakriti* of the *bala* under a calamity or *vyasana*—which is implicitly not sustainable. KA suggest that calamities and disasters (*vysanas*) afflicting the *saptangas* (seven *prakritis* or constituents of the state) must be removed. Is there then an option to have mix of paramilitary and other troops for ANA? We have seen how historians have assumed Chola army not being a regular one. Also many warlords in Afghanistan may be the same manifestation of the *mlechchha* tribes like *kirata* highlanders; the *atavikas*, foresters; and warrior clans called

*sastropajivisrenis*. It is apparent that the KA provides a framework. It suggests the right mix of what the army “ought” to be under the given political economy and politics. A similar exercise is being done for the case of Afghanistan at the national and international level. Thus, the ancient text could dwell so deeply on the people, military labour market and composition of the army. Policy-makers for the ANA can learn from KA and also see for themselves how a modern Indian Army has been formed and institutionalised.

**Europe:** Today in Europe, barring Switzerland, there is no conscription and all militaries are professional volunteer armies. The character of war has changed. Conquest of territory is now thing of the past. The European Union (EU) without the need of wars or *danda* is one whole *Chakravartikshetra* without any *vijigisu* in the military sense. As a result, for EU, bereft of an international or European *matsyanyaya* and without a need for a *mandala* theory, these changes appear welcome and logical to a limited extent. The explanation for this being limited is because EU has not foreclosed any defence and security policy of hard military power, including the shining example of the NATO.

In the case of India, it may be impractical to apply or transpose this EU model today. India has to have adequate and dissuasive military force and power to deal with protection of its sovereignty with its disputed borders with Pakistan and China. Thus, in the Indian context, there may not be a need to imitate the European models (of course Special Forces, RMA aspects, cyber warfare, etc., are different).

## Morale and Non-Material Issues

The second non-material matter relating to issues today, from the text, is about morale. Kautilya’s greatest contribution is to conceptualise the state as a set of functions consisting of seven *prakritis* or constituent elements in Book VI *The Circle of Kings*.<sup>44</sup> These functions required not merely an explanation of the government but a much fuller definition of what constituted the state. This is first expressed in the Kautilya *Arthashastra*.<sup>45</sup> The seven constituent elements or *prakritis* are—*svamin* (king or ruler), *amatya* (body of ministers and structure of administration), *janapada/*

*rashtra* (territory being agriculturally fertile with mines, forest and pastures, water resources and communication system for trade), *durga/pura* (fort), *kosha* (treasury), *danda/bala* (army) and *mitra* (ally).<sup>46</sup> *Prakritis* are mentioned in a book devoted to calamities or disasters. The Eighth Book of KA deals with the calamities that affect the various constituents (*prakritis*) of the state. It is necessary to take precautions against these before one can start on an expedition of conquest.

We now only relate the calamity of the army. Chapter Five, Section 133 contains sutras 1 to 21 covering ‘The Group of Calamities of the Army’. *Sutra* 1 reads, “The calamities of the army are: 1) (the state of being) unhonoured, 2) dishonoured, 3) unpaid, 4) sick, 5) newly-arrived, 6) come after a long march, 7) exhausted, 8) depleted, 9) repulsed, 10) broken in the first onslaught, 11) caught in an unsuitable season, 12) caught in an unsuitable terrain, 13) despondent of hope, 14) deserted, 15) with women-folk inside, 16) with ‘darts’ inside, 17) with a rebellious base, 18) split inside, 19) run away, 20) widely scattered, 21) encamped near, 22) completely absorbed, 23) blocked, 24) encircled, 25) with supplies of grains and men cut off, 26) dispersed in one’s own land, 27) dispersed in an ally’s land, 28) infested with treasonable men, 29) with a hostile enemy in the rear, 30) with its base denuded (of troops), 31) not united with the master, 32) with head broken, and 33) blind.”<sup>47</sup>

Most of the calamities, barring (1), (2) and (3), are operational matters of combat. However, the next *sutra* is an indication of how to treat the military. In issues of morale, *sutra* 2 says, “Among these, as between an unhonoured and dishonoured (army), the unhonoured would fight when honoured with money, not the dishonoured, with resentment in its heart.” As a precaution, *sutra* 21 says, “The (king), ever diligent, should take steps right beforehand against that cause because of which he might suffer a calamity of the constituents.”

Here the moral aspect of state-society-civil military relationship appears paramount, then and now. While the KA may provide no clear-cut solution to the dynamic equation of civil-military relations (CMR), it only provides good pointers to the morale and motivation aspects like terms of service and pay and allowances and the military being in the loop in national security related aspect of military preparedness. At no time the military

should be seen to be unhonoured and dishonoured. The text of KA does show remarkably how in ancient texts in India so many issues were thought through. Interestingly, KA could be a precursor to western literature on CMR such as that of S.P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State*. Though meant for America, the book has often been taken as a universal yardstick in literature. Likewise, the literature on fear or perception of a military takeover or coup in independent India often gives the example of Pakistan military undertaking regular coups starting with the 1950s; whereas the subconscious roots of the fear may well lie elsewhere. The one fact of Mauryan Empire which may not be in current public imagination may be a historic fear of military coup. According to the *Puranas*, in 187 BCE, the Mauryan Empire collapsed when its last ruler Brihadratha was overthrown and assassinated by his military commander (*senapati*), Pushyamitra Sunga, who then founded the Sunga dynasty<sup>48</sup> which ruled for over a century.

## **Conclusion**

Using text and then relating it to the context as in the past and today, it becomes clear that codification and options exist in the sutras spread across the books of the *Arthashastra*. Matters concerning the composition of the army, employment of troops to task and gradation of types of troops in a hierarchy exist in the text. As I show, when studied critically using hermeneutic and heuristic methods, it seems that the many concepts are applicable even today. It is clear that more multidisciplinary work with interpretation and commentaries is now required to update this literature. The literature from south India further gives some clue to fundamental differences in the composition of the army and the pecking order. From a further study of text and then relating them to battle accounts, it will be possible to give a more authentic picture. However, in the reality of Indian tradition and ethos, unlike Greek accounts of Thucydides or ancient Chinese accounts, archival record keeping is not minute and thorough. While this could be a cultural trait, the challenge lies in reconstructing war histories and then relating it to the text. This paper was one preliminary attempt.

## NOTES

1. A.L. Basham, *Wonder That Was India*, Third revised ed., Picador, London, 2004, p. 133.
2. See: Patrick Olivelle's chapter in this volume which quotes 2.2.6-11 "At the frontier he [Superintendent of Elephants] should establish an elephant-forest guarded by foresters (*atavi*)."
3. Book Nine, *The Activity of the King About to March*, Chapter Two, Sections 137, 138 and 139. Here employment of heredity, the hired, the banded, the allies, the alien and forest troops are mentioned. Also see: R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra (Part III)*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2010, pp. 245-246.
4. R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra (Part II): An English Translation with Critical and Explanatory Notes*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1986, Book nine, Chapter two, Section 137, 138 and 139, sutra 23, p. 409, 412, and R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthasastra (Part III): A Study*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1986, p. 245.
5. R.K. Mookerji, "The Foundation of the Maurya Empire", in K.A. Nilakanta Sastri (ed.), *A Comprehensive History of India, Volume II, The Mauryan and Satavahans, 325 BC – AD 300*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1957, Second Imprint, 1987, Chapter 1, p. 3. (Published under auspices of The Indian History Congress and The Bhartiya Itihas Parishad).
6. J. Sundaram, "Chola and Other Armies—Organization", in S.N. Prasad (ed.), *Historical Perspectives of Warfare in India: Some Morale and Material Determinants* in P. Chattopadhyaya (General Editor), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Vol. X, Part 3, Section II, South India, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi, 2002, Chapter 5, pp. 191-192.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
10. S.N. Prasad, "Introduction", S.N. Prasad (ed.), *Historical Perspectives of Warfare in India: Some Morale and Material Determinants*, in P. Chattopadhyaya (General Editor), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Vol. X, Part 3, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi, 2002, p. 28.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
12. J. Sundaram, "Chola and Other Armies—Organization", S.N. Prasad (ed.), *Historical Perspectives of Warfare in India: Some Morale and Material Determinants* in P. Chattopadhyaya (General Editor), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Vol. X, Part 3, Section II, South India, Chapter 5, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi, 2002, p. 191. A list of over one hundred military units of the Cholas under each king has been included in this study by J. Sundaram. See Appendix 1, pp. 243-248. This sort of historical data is unique.
13. J. Sundaram, "Chola and Other Armies—Organization", S.N. Prasad (ed.), *Historical Perspectives of Warfare in India: Some Morale and Material Determinants*, in P. Chattopadhyaya (General Editor), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Vol. X, Part 3, Section II, South India, Chapter 5, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 196-197.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
15. Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980.
16. Ranabir Chakravarti, *Exploring Early India up to c. AD 1300*, 2nd edition, Macmillan, New Delhi, 2013, p. 148.
17. The Mauryan Empire also declined in the post Ashoka period. One reason possibly could have been due to lack of sustained capacity to extract taxes for a large standing army and bureaucracy.
18. Charles Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1962, p. 188.
19. Ranabir Chakravarti, note 16, p. 333.
20. The Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research of the United Service Institution of India (USI) has commenced work on recovery and preservation of the fast dying oral and bardic traditions “Alha and Udal” of the medieval period/11th century on wars fought amongst the Rajputs kingdoms in north/central India like Parmars, Prithviraj and Chandelas, etc.
21. One English translation of the *Kurals* has only one chapter of 10 *sutras* on the characteristic of a good army and another chapter of 10 *sutras* on warriors. See: W.H. Drew and John Lazarus (tr.), *Thirukkural*, seventh reprint, Asian Education Services, New Delhi/Chennai, 2014, p. 155, 157.
22. B.K. Chaturvedi, *Vishnu Puran*, Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 2010, p. 58. *Dhanurveda* or archery was an *upaveda* or auxiliary *Veda* of *Yajurveda*. See: Tara Chanda (coordinated), McGraw Hill Education Series, *General Studies, Paper I for Civil Services Preliminary Examination*, Paper I, McGraw Hill, New Delhi, 2014, p. 15.
23. R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra (Part II)*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2010, p. 180, [2.33.8].
24. K.V. Krishna Rao, *In the Service of the Nation*, Vikings/Penguin Books India Limited, New Delhi, 2001, p. 7.
25. R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra (Part III)*, Second edition, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2010, pp. 257-258.
26. Book Nine, *The Activity of the King about to March*, Chapter Two, Sections 137, 138 and 139. Also see: R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra*, note 25, pp. 245-246.
27. R.P. Kangle, note 23, pp. 409-411, [9.2.1-12].
28. *Ibid.*, p. 412, [9.2.13-24].
29. *Ibid.*, p. 412, [9.2.18-20].
30. *Ibid.*, p. 412, [9.2.21-24].
31. *Ibid.*, p. 56, [2.1.5].
32. According to Patrick Olivelle’s translation and interpretation, Candala refers to outcaste people within the social structure described in the *Dharmasastras*. Here, however, it refers to some kind of tribal people living in remote locations, which was probably its original meaning. See: Patrick Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya’s Arthashastra, A New Annotated Translation*, Oxford

- University Press, New York, 2013, p. 99, [2.1.6].
33. R.P. Kangle, note 23, p. 56, [2.1.6].
  34. *Sarga* (Canton) 19, *Prakarana* (Section) 28, Verse 23 [19.28.23], *The Nitisara (The Element of Polity) by Kamandaki*, Rajendra Lala Mitra (ed.), Revised with English Translation by Sisir Kumar Mitra, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1982, pp. 395-396.
  35. R.P. Kangle, note 23, p. 368, [7.14.27].
  36. *Ibid.*, p. 438, [10.3.4.].
  37. *Ibid.*
  38. *Ibid.*, p. 453, [10.6.48-50].
  39. Book Nine, *The Activity of the King about to March*, Chapter Two, Sections 137, 138 and 139. Here employment of heredity, the hired, the banded, the allies, the alien and forest troops are mentioned. Also see: R.P. Kangle, note 25, pp. 245-246.
  40. N. Bahri, "The Revolutionary Government of Nagaland Joins the National Mainstream", *USI Journal*, CXLIII(591), January-March 2013, pp. 150-153.
  41. R.P. Kangle, note 23, pp. 448-449, [10.5.41-52].
  42. See: Book Review by Lauro Martines in *Time Literary Supplement* (TLS), August 10, 2012; of the book by Michael Edward Mallett and Christine Shaw, *Italian Wars, 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe*, Pearson, 2012.
  43. See: Chapter Twelfth, Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by W.K. Marriot with an introduction by Dominic Baker-Smith, Everyman's Library, London, 1908, reprint 1992, p. 55.
  44. R.P. Kangle, note 23, p. 314, [6.1.1].
  45. Romila Thapar, *History and Beyond: Comprising Interpreting Early India; Time as a Metaphor of History; Cultural Transactions and Early India and From Lineage to State*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 121-122.
  46. R.P. Kangle, note 23, pp. 314-317, [6.1.1-18].
  47. *Ibid.*, pp. 401-404, [8.5.1-21].
  48. Romila Thapar, note 45, p. 162.

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PART II

STRATEGIC CULTURE,  
NEGOTIATIONS AND  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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# 5

## Strategic Culture in South Asia: Kautilyan Sempiternity

*Rashed Uz Zaman*

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Exiled Thucydides knew  
All that a speech can say  
About Democracy  
And what dictators do,  
The elderly rubbish they talk  
To an apathetic grave;  
Analysed all in his book,  
The enlightenment driven away,  
The habit-forming pain,  
Mismanagement and grief.  
We must suffer them all again.

— *W.H. Auden* (September 1, 1939)

In the third stanza of his famous poem penned on the eve of World War II, Auden refers to the exiled Greek historian Thucydides and reminds us that Thucydides did not write only for his generation or the next. Rather, Thucydides believed his description of events would withstand the ravages

of history and hoped that, despite the passage of time, generations in the centuries ahead would stand to gain from studying his account of the Peloponnesian War. Perhaps, Thucydides' belief stemmed from the fact that he observed human nature and believed certain patterns may be discerned from them. Of course, some of these patterns were unique only to Greece. Nevertheless, these traditions and longstanding values define the manner in which human beings act and distinguish between right and wrong. A layman's understanding of such values and norms would be what is called culture.

All societies are circumscribed by culture. Writing about Kautilya, the ancient Indian strategic thinker, one scholar came to the conclusion that Kautilya's teachings as compiled in his magnum opus, the *Arthashastra*, were influenced by the society where Kautilya lived and worked. The political thought of Kautilya was affected by Hindu society, including class, caste, and customs.<sup>1</sup> In modern times, human beings, in spite of the breathtaking advances in science and technology, are yet to transcend culture. Christopher Coker pointed out that in one of the first wars of the twenty-first century, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan was hobbled by cultural dynamics at work, especially when it came to working between the armed forces of different member states, all of which had different experiences and, thus, different methods of implementing objectives.<sup>2</sup> This brief summary of historical texts and conflicts tells us that culture is an important element in explaining the way human beings act, and of course, formulate strategy.

This paper aims to provide an understanding of the concept of strategic culture and its relevance for South Asia. Section one opens with a discussion of the concept of political culture and the emergence of strategic culture. Section two looks at the concept of strategic culture and the various debates surrounding it. Section three highlights the pitfalls and problems associated with the concept. Section four discusses how the concept of strategic culture has gained currency for understanding the behaviour of South Asian countries. The paper concludes by looking at how Kautilya and the concept of strategic culture are related and what implication this has for understanding South Asia's strategic future.

## From Political Culture to Strategic Culture

Political scientists like Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba were the first to develop the concept of political culture in the 1960s. For them political culture was “that subset of beliefs and values of a society that relate to the political system.”<sup>3</sup> For Almond and Verba, political culture included views about morality and the utility of force, the rights of individuals or groups, commitment to values like democratic principles and institutions, and attitudes toward the role a country can play in global politics. The study of political culture took off and in the 1980s, a select group of political scientists, mostly comparativists, started looking for more linkages between culture and politics. However, while the concept of political culture managed to remain alive in area studies, it attracted little attention in mainstream international relations scholarship.<sup>4</sup>

Even though political culture had lost some of its lustre by the late 1970s, the subject itself left an important legacy in that it led to emergence and development of the concept of strategic culture. Colin S. Gray noted that strategic culture is a direct descendent of the concept of political culture. Drawing on the World War II “national character studies” of Axis Powers by Ruth Benedict and Nathan Leites, he made the following conclusion: that the idea of national style is derived from the concept of political culture and a particular culture should encourage a particular style in thought and action.<sup>5</sup> However, it would be a mistake to deduce that it was only in the late 1970s and early 1980s that scholars realised the connection between culture and national security policy. In the 1930s, the former British Army officer Basil H. Liddell Hart postulated that there was something called a traditional “British Way in Warfare” and for Hart it meant Britain’s traditional way of conducting conflicts, which involved avoiding direct military intervention and instead confronting the enemy through economic blockade carried out by the Royal Navy and financing auxiliaries who would bear the load of fighting on the land.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after Liddell Hart’s death in 1970, United States (US) military historian Russell Weigley produced *The American Way of War*, offering an in-depth analysis of the way the US States fought wars.<sup>7</sup>

While some other works on national style of warfare were written, it

were the realities of the Cold War that made some scholars feel the need that a coherent concept was needed to understand why countries approached and fought wars in different ways. The first blow was delivered by Colin S. Gray in a 1971 article in the journal *Foreign Policy* where he scathingly laid bare the fallacy of the rational-actor assumptions of much of the prevailing theories on the use of nuclear weapons as instruments of statecraft. However, it was not in the nuclear realm alone that Gray raised troubling questions. Writing at a time when the US was fighting the Vietnam War, Gray pointed out that American theorists were working using inappropriate economic models and American strategic thinking was highly ethnocentric.<sup>8</sup> Gray's discontent was echoed by other scholars. One such voice was that of Adda B. Bozeman. In her "*War and the Clash of Ideas*", published in the spring 1976 issue of *Orbis*, Bozeman attacked the idea that international violence was the result of structural deficiencies of the newly-independent post-colonial countries. She derided the fact that "no allowance was made for the possibility that war-related phenomenon might be, perhaps even predominantly, aspects of locally prevalent values, images, traditions and mental constructions."<sup>9</sup>

It was in such an academic milieu that the US think-tank RAND's analyst Jack Snyder heralded the beginning of the strategic culture movement in 1977 with a study of the Soviet limited nuclear war doctrine. The study was a RAND report titled *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, and it was here that the definition of strategic culture was offered: "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation."<sup>10</sup> Snyder would soon move away from the concept of strategic culture but his effort led to the growth of a considerable amount of work devoted to the concept of strategic culture. The large number of works on the subject has resulted in the classification of the literature in various groups. One scholar classified the literature pertaining to strategic culture into two general categories based on the methodological approach.<sup>11</sup> The first is identified as "broad descriptive". The writings on strategic culture which came out in the 1970s and 1980s made up this category. Its approach to the subject involves broad historical analyses of patterns in

strategic behaviour of specific states, attributing culturally derived causes to those patterns, and then projecting them into the future. The “analytical school” of strategic culture made its appearance in the 1990s. Here analytical scholars use narrower definitions of culture and more rigorous methods for testing its effects on specific classes of strategic behaviour.

It was another scholar, Alastair Iain Johnston, who presented a more detailed description and classification of the literature on strategic culture. Johnston proposed that the research on strategic culture can be divided into three generations.<sup>12</sup> The first generation, which came into the scene in the early 1980s, comprised mostly of western analysts working in the field of national security and Soviet Union and they attempted to explain why the US and Soviet Union had different ways of thinking about nuclear strategy. They attributed such differences to variations in deeply rooted historical experiences, political culture, and geography. The mid-1980s saw the emergence of the second generation and they viewed the superpowers from a Gramscian perspective. Recognising the possibility of a disjuncture between a symbolic strategic-cultural discourse and operations doctrines, this generation believed that discourse was used to perpetuate the hegemony of strategic elites. Such perpetuation ensured the implementation of the designs of the elites. The third generation emerged in the 1990s. Johnston identified himself as a representative of this generation and claimed that this generation is conceptually and methodologically more rigorous. These scholars narrowed the focus of the dependent variables in order to set up more reliable and valid empirical tests for the effects of strategic culture, and have focused on a wide range of case studies.

Johnston’s description of the three generations has gained popularity. Of course, some have pointed out the nuances in this classification and have sought to correct some of the dates. Thus, Gray points out that though the generations overlap, the peak of their intellectual activity can be associated primarily with the late 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. For Gray, all generations add up to a small group of people, with the first-generation scholars focusing upon a more Russian and Soviet (USSR) than the prevailing theories of that time recognised. Deciphering the cunning coded messages behind the language of strategic studies was the objective

of the second-generation scholars. The third-generation's objectives seem to be mainly researchability.<sup>13</sup>

## **Difficulties and Dangers of Strategic Culture**

Just as culture encourages drawing attention to neglected areas, emphasis on culture has dangers of its own. It can easily lead to wrong conclusions. Ironically, attention on the peculiarities of others may lead to reinforcing stereotypes instead of raising questions about them. In this context it should be pointed out that there is a tendency to think of classic thinkers on strategy, such as Sun Tzu, Kautilya and Clausewitz as representing different Eastern and Western traditions. Thus, one portrays the followers of Clausewitz, the blundering and tactless Western armies transfixed with the notions of application of massive firepower add decisive combat. On the other side there are followers of Sun Tzu or Kautilya, weaker but wily foes, whose preferred *modus operandi* are deception and the 'indirect approach'. However, such dichotomies may prove to be illusory for too many contrary cases often crop up and they tend to cut across such neat frontiers. John Lynn argues against a continuous 'Western' military tradition, pointing out that in during the Warring States period in ancient China, states mobilized large conscript armies, equipped them in a manner comparable to Western forces, with the objective of fighting frontal battles.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, deception and the tendency to avoid frontal battles are not monopoly of the East. The campaign of the Duke of Wellington and the Spanish irregulars in the Peninsular War (1808-1814 CE) can be cited as an example to illustrate this point. Many features that some might identify as Eastern ways of war were efficiently used in this decidedly Western war. These included tactics of diversion and concealment, effective light infantry, and a people's war urged on by local clergymen. Such operations eventually lead to major frontal battles against an exasperated and demoralised enemy. The Spanish episode only serves to reiterate the view that 'metacultural' vision of war as a symptom of intrinsic differences between cultures is not a trusted method of explaining actual historical behaviour.<sup>15</sup>

The problem of strategic culture also extends to the issue of reception, or understanding selective ways of how traditions are read and used. Echevarria in a brief but hard-hitting piece on strategic culture shows how

politicisation and the use of strategic culture in the public sphere often overlook the subtle nature of the issue. Taking up Robert Kagan's study of European and American strategic cultures, Echevarria points out that Kagan asserts that Europeans are from Venus and Americans from Mars or, skipping the celestial analogies, Europeans and Americans exhibit different strategic cultures. Americans, Kagan believes, are more accommodative when it comes to using military force to further political goals. Europeans, on the other hand, tend to view the reliance on military force as crude and naïve. Instead, they preferred diplomacy to further their interests. Such a view presumes to speak for an American strategic culture whose presence can be felt through the actions of the US in various parts of the world. Echevarria takes up this issue and rightly points out that such a view does not take into cognisance the fact that dialectical tensions are present in American politics and strategy. Kagan, argues Echevarria, presents a one dimensional representation, a caricature perhaps, of the American worldview that was perhaps true of the administration of George W. Bush but not of the administrations preceding or succeeding it. For Echevarria, the fact that strategic culture helps such facile representations is one of its major flaws.<sup>16</sup> However, the tendency of stereotyping a particular community or people with a specific way of fighting is not something which afflicts only Americans. The British found out time and again that adaptive enemies seem to have a mind of their own and often refuse to behave according to cultural preconceptions. In New Zealand, the British thought the enemy would fight as traditionalists. Instead, the Maoris refused to stay within their traditional wooden palisades (known as *pa*) and thus become easy pickings for British artillery. Debunking the stereotypical idea about them, the Maoris turned the palisades into decoys and created a subterranean system of trench defence and tunnels that served as a prelude to the trench warfare in the Western front of World War I.<sup>17</sup> Keeping such examples in mind, Patrick Porter warns us that the cultural essentialism often fails to deal with multi-faceted complexities of military performance. It is not able to discern the adaptability and wiliness of actors taking part in war. More importantly, he contends, strategic culture suffers from a teleological view of history, making facts fit a theory to confirm its urgent contemporary agenda, which is to make today's strategic practitioners aware of cultural differences. However, it must be borne in mind that culture "is only a part

of the context in which strategic decisions are made, one variable in a matrix of negotiated interests along with material circumstances, power imbalances and individuals.”<sup>18</sup> For Porter, cultural legacies are integral in the process of decision-making and behaviour. However, it is not exhaustive of it or a static element within it.<sup>19</sup>

Such pitfalls tend to raise doubts whether there is anything unique about the study of strategic cultures of various security communities since all tend to act like each other, big powers merely acting like big powers, mimicking the way other big powers behave.<sup>20</sup> In other words, the need to ensure and further one’s security is the prime concern of states and the logic of realism pervades the behaviour of states. However, this article tends to argue that there are, and can be, no “unencultured” realists.<sup>21</sup> Security communities may display similarity at times in their strategic behaviour but this does not mean there is a universal theory of strategic behaviour. The field of strategic studies operated under this false assumption when it accepted theories which were premised on the assumption of homogenous rational actors influenced by rational choices. As Colin Gray reminds us, one may be North Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Bosnian, Serbian, Indian, North Korean, Iraqi, Iranian, or whatnot, but one performs realist calculations in ways that fits one’s values, not the logic of some general strategic theory.<sup>22</sup> Given such premise, this article proposes that South Asian countries also tend to have their distinctive strategic culture. India, because of its size, history, military and economic prowess has naturally attracted attention of scholars and much has been written on Indian strategic culture. Pakistan has also been under scrutiny due to its geopolitical location, nuclear policy and security challenges brought by internal and external realities. While little or no attempt has been made to understand the strategic culture of other South Asian countries, it is great power politics between India and Pakistan that has tended to dominate this field in this region. This article follows the existing trend keeping in mind the primary goal here—to analyse Kautilya’s relevance on strategic culture of South Asia.

## **Strategic Culture as Seen from a South Asian Perspective**

George K. Tanham initiated the debate about Indian strategic culture in his provocative 1992 essay, *“Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive*

*Essay*”, in which he argued that India lacked a “tradition of strategic thinking”. He pointed out that history, geography and culture all combined to keep India “on the strategic defensive vis-à-vis her main competitors.”<sup>23</sup> Tanham subsequently developed his arguments in a volume co-edited by two Indian strategic thinkers Kanti Bajpai and Amitabh Mattoo.<sup>24</sup> Writing in the same volume, W.P.S. Sidhu argued that contrary to Tanham’s position, India did have a strategic tradition which was nurtured by India’s oral tradition and the roots of this tradition date to ancient times. Sidhu refers to the *Mahabharata* epic as well as the *Arthashastra* as sources of such a tradition.<sup>25</sup> The discussion on India’s strategic culture was further enriched by Stephen P. Cohen’s *India: Emerging Power* which came out in 2001. While mainly in dealing with the India’s foreign relations in the post-Cold War period, Cohen discusses the impact of history and culture on defining the world-view of India’s security and foreign policy-making elites and pointed out that Indian strategic culture combines idealist and realist elements. The task of combining the two strands may lead to complexity, but Indians have mastered this task and Cohen believes India’s future trajectory will show that “there is a recognizably Indian worldview and a recognizably Indian way of dealing with that world.”<sup>26</sup>

The need for an understanding of strategic culture in the context of the South Asian region was reiterated by Manjeet S. Pardesi. In his monograph on India’s grand strategy, Pardesi came to the conclusion that India, like any other rising power aspires for regional hegemony. Making a deft use of historical sources and conceptual ideas, Pardesi attempted to deduce India’s grand strategy of regional hegemony. By studying five pan-Indian powers, namely the Mauryas, Guptas, Mughals, British India and the Republic of India, Pardesi drew the conclusion that though India did not consciously or wilfully pursued a grand strategy, its historical experiences and geo-strategic environment have strongly influenced its strategic behaviour and foreign policy objectives.<sup>27</sup>

Understanding of strategic culture as shaped by history, identity and geopolitics is also pertinent for explaining the causes and nature of both India and Pakistan’s nuclear programmes. Of course, given the technical and scientific causes underlying nuclear programmes in various countries, questions may be raised if strategic culture can be of any use in explaining

nuclear policies. However, it should be emphasised here that the thinkers and planners behind nuclear bombs were men who were conditioned by the way they understood India and Pakistan's respective histories. Writing about the first atomic bombs constructed by the European refugee scientists in the United States, John Lukacs reminds us that the "causes" of the atom bomb were historical (and ultimately, personal); they were scientific and technical only on a secondary level of "causes". The main reasons for the development of the bomb included Nazism, the persecution of Jews in Germany and the Second World War. Lukacs contends that the bomb was made at a particular time and for a specific purpose and not merely because at a particular phase of scientific development a certain level of technological knowledge was attained. He argues that it was actually because at a certain point in history, certain scientists began to fear that fellow scientists might be constructing an atomic weapon for the Nazi regime. Although important scientific and technological breakthroughs had taken place between 1938 and 1945, these ought not to obscure the principal reasons behind the bomb's creation, which as in every historical act, were formed by personal choices, through historical thinking and historical consciousness, and conditioned by the political, racial, national, religious and ideological inclinations of responsible individuals.<sup>28</sup> India's nuclear programme is also influenced by outlook and experience of her scientists and policy planners. Of course, it cannot be denied that realist considerations played the most important role in propelling India towards nuclear weapons.<sup>29</sup> However, this realist thinking has been Indian in nature. The motivations for such thinking and behaviour are influenced by what Indians think about themselves.<sup>30</sup> In an earlier writing on India's nuclear programme, I have tried to show that history, religion, geography and the political understanding of technology have all interacted and produced a distinctively Indian approach to nuclear weapons. While all nuclear states of the world have traversed more or less the same trajectory towards obtaining nuclear weapons, the rationales and the way they went about doing it differed. Strategic culture helps explain these different pathways and styles.<sup>31</sup> A similar claim can also be made with regard to Pakistan's nuclear programme.<sup>32</sup>

Strategic culture will assume more relevance as South Asia's security

issues assume more importance in international politics. In fact, there are signs that academics have already started looking at strategic culture to understand power dynamics of South Asian region and beyond. In a recently published book, Gilboy and Heginbotham have highlighted the relevance of strategic culture to understand Chinese and Indian security doctrines and practices. While cautioning about the dangers of reading too much into ancient texts as repositories of modern strategic culture, they do emphasise on the need to have a comparative study of strategic cultures for understanding international behaviour of Asia's rising powers.<sup>33</sup> This article, too, while reiterating the importance of strategic culture in understanding strategic behaviour, also raises a cautionary signal about reading too much into strategic culture. While taking full cognisance of the importance of history and tradition in understanding conventional and nuclear security policies of South Asian countries, it should be borne in mind that culture is not transhistorical, either in the sense that it can be traced back to some 'authentic' pre-colonial traditions or that it is timeless, immutable and unchanging.<sup>34</sup> Randolph Cooper's brilliant study of the Maratha Confederacy serves to highlight that groups within India had their own unique way of fighting and did not necessarily subscribe to a culture stretching back across time. In his *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy*, Cooper shows that the Maratha armies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were extremely cosmopolitan, an army that included Hindus from every caste, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.<sup>35</sup> He also seeks to dispel the myth about the non-conventional approach to warfare as purportedly practiced by the Marathas and points out that Shivaji Bhonsle (1627-80 CE) actually commanded regular formations of infantry and artillery which were as competent as their European contemporaries. He even had naval ships operating in the Arabian Sea which were crewed in part by Portuguese mercenaries.<sup>36</sup> Cooper also points out that the Marathas were finally defeated by the British in 1803 CE. It was not due to any 'Western military superiority' but by use of East India Company's financial resources to persuade a number of professional soldiers, including most of the European mercenaries, to abandon Maratha service during the course of the decisive campaign.<sup>37</sup> The study of the Maratha armies leads Cooper to conclude that Marathas made effective use of the comparative advantages offered

by technology as well as military doctrine. He shows that they favoured a “doctrine of artillery-based fire superiority long before the Europeans as can be seen in their willingness to carry heavy artillery into the field and use it in an anti-personal context.”<sup>38</sup> Drawing lessons from Cooper’s masterly study, Sondhaus notes that the Maratha armies show how within India’s diversity, military developments usually are influenced by their local geography and context, and not necessarily by “the values and practices inherent in some overarching meta-narrative.”<sup>39</sup>

While the above discussion of strategic culture tends to show the understanding of strategic culture from the perspective of South Asian countries, it also does not shy away from the task of pointing out the difficulties of putting too much importance upon strategic culture. While a balancing act is needed to make effective use of the concept, it should also be borne in mind that any discussion on strategic culture of India inevitably focuses on Kautilya and his great text on strategy, the *Arthashastra*. The next section will, therefore, attempt to discern the presence of Kautilya’s teachings in the strategic culture of South Asian countries. Given India’s overwhelming presence in the region, it is natural that attention is paid to India’s behaviour. However, attempt will also be made to show why Kautilya is not pertinent only for understanding India but also other South Asian countries.

## **Kautilya and Strategic Culture in South Asia**

India’s philosophical tradition is rich and varied. Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religious, literary and political traditions talk of themes of idealism, realism, restraint and tolerance and form part of a complex weave of influences on Indian political behaviour. However, Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is viewed by scholars as the most important ancient Indian text on strategy.<sup>40</sup> In an erudite discussion on the relevance of Kautilya for India, Michael Liebig reminds us that *Arthashastra*’s influence on India has been largely, if not predominantly, latent. By looking at the state of post-1947 India and its key players, Liebig comes to the conclusion that the “subcutaneous” presence of Kautilya’s teachings is an important component of Indian politico-strategic culture.<sup>41</sup> Kautilya’s relevance has also been highlighted by other students of India’s domestic and international policies. Thus, in

explaining South Asia's many security challenges, one scholar points that India's internal and external policies demonstrated an adherence to the Kautilyan School of diplomacy.<sup>42</sup> This view gains credence when one sees Indian political elites using Kautilya to explain India's approach to her immediate neighbourhood and the rest of the world. Thus, then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee states the importance of using Kautilya's "concentric circles" approach for furthering India's foreign and security objectives. The Congress Party echoed a similar viewpoint in 2007 and such statements reveal Indian policymakers' strategic thinking.<sup>43</sup> The author of this article himself has also waded in the debate about the relevance of Kautilya for making sense of Indian strategic culture and firmly believes that the *Arthashastra* offers to persistent and careful readers valuable road signs on the path to understanding Indian strategic behaviour.<sup>44</sup>

The presence of Kautilya's teachings, however, should not mean such thinking is unique to India. Indeed, strategic thinking throughout history and across geographical frontiers has exhibited similar patterns. Williamson Murray's discussion on Thucydides shows deception and stealth were practiced by the ancient Greeks and it was one such stealth attack, and not the classic hoplite assault, on the smaller *polis* of Plataea by the Thebans which triggered off the Peloponnesian war.<sup>45</sup> The Greeks, like any other culture, sustained conflicting ideas about grand strategy. It shifted between the "traditionalists," who derived their intellectual sustenance from the exploits of Achilles, hero of the *Illiad*. This school saw the world as an anarchic arena where power was the ultimate guarantee of security. On the other hand, there were the "modernists," followers of Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic *Odyssey*, who although viewing the world as an anarchic environment stressed an adoption of multilateralism and cooperation as means of ensuring security.<sup>46</sup> However, the similarities between what is identified as uniquely Indian contribution to strategic thinking, namely the idea of the *matsya-nyaya*, the *mandala* system, is also widely known and practiced all over the world. Thus, Christopher Clark's scholarly discussion on the origins of the First World paints a pre-1914 European world of intrigues, deception and alliances and counter-alliances all culminating in the horrors of World War I.<sup>47</sup> It is this propensity to trace back state policies and postures to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* which leads one Indian analyst to

point out that the “tendency to draw parallels as a pseudo-literary style in strategic writing is very common.”<sup>48</sup> Gautam’s point is well taken and this article has attempted to show the strategic gems strewn in the *Arthashastra* is not only perceived in the behaviour of India but may be identified in other South Asian countries. Gautam’s observation that *modus operandi* of security agencies of countries all across the world show that Kautilya’s teachings are not necessarily limited to an esoteric Indian way of thinking but have been willingly adopted by other countries.<sup>49</sup> In the last section of this article, I argue that it is this universal appeal of the *Arthashastra* which makes it a classic and Kautilya’s influence is not confined to the strategic culture of only South Asian states but is relevant whenever political communities act strategically.

## **Kautilya and the Future**

The *Arthashastra*’s importance for strategic studies should start from the simple premise that Kautilya wrote a classic; and ask a question, if the *Arthashastra* is a text which each generation reads in its own way to seek answers to its particular need, and always finding something new in it. Writing about Thucydides’ *The Peloponnesian War*, Charles Hill noted it is a manual of statecraft which comprises essentials for any statesman: economics, governance, diplomacy, the foibles of leaders, the difficulty of maintaining a balance between public and private spheres and the certainty of uncertainty.<sup>50</sup> A cursory glance through the *Arthashastra* would yield discussion on all of these issues and more. Thus, we find Kautilya offering counsels on matters broader than war alone. He warns on the capricious nature of conflict and advises that unless it leads to decline of one’s strength, wars are to be preferred to peace.<sup>51</sup> Kautilya well understands that it is important to generate and sustain wealth for a king who cannot ensure economic wellbeing of the people and who may soon lose his legitimacy to rule over the kingdom.<sup>52</sup> The moral quality of leaders, the welfare of the people, the issue of justice and ensuring the legitimacy of the powers that be also are of immense importance to Kautilya.<sup>53</sup> The *Arthashastra* also advises the leader desirous of success to ensure justice and legitimacy are on his side and success will surely follow both in military sector and foreign policy matter.<sup>54</sup>

Of course, this does not mean Kautilya is a master strategist as envisioned by Harry Yarger, for whom “strategic thinking is about thoroughness and holistic thinking” and this holistic perspective in turn would require “a comprehensive knowledge of what else is happening within the strategic environment and the potential first-, second-, third-order effects of its own choices on the efforts of those above, below, and on the strategist’s own level.”<sup>55</sup> Lawrence Freedman is quick to dispel the myth of the master strategist.<sup>56</sup> So, where does this leave Kautilya? What use is there for the *Arthashastra* in the brave, new world? One can come up with a counter-question: Is there a ‘modern’ world? Robert Kaplan has argued that there is no ‘modern’ world.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, one must remember that strategy is strategy throughout the ages. Colin Gray’s *mea culpa* that modern strategy is a misleading term and that “strategy is strategy whether it be ancient, medieval, modern or future”<sup>58</sup> only serves to strengthen this paper’s contention that Kautilya’s strategic thinking applies across the ages for he wrote for a strategic world, a world “wherein states, groups, or individuals threaten or employ force for political ends.”<sup>59</sup> As long as human beings strive to create, sustain and develop political communities, there will be a need for reading the *Arthashastra*.

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# 6

## Bargaining and Negotiation Analysis: Lessons from *Arthashastra*

*Medha Bisht*

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Are the principles of *Arthashastra* universal? Do they matter irrespective of time and place? These questions become pertinent, given that Kautilyan principles took roots almost two millennia ago, when the nature of polities were small, monarchy was prevalent, and one was oblivious to the ‘meanings’ of certain central terms such as state, sovereignty, power, order, rights, freedom—concepts which formed an essential body of thought in the Western philosophical tradition. While this paper acknowledges the contextual relevance of the time that these terms were contextualised/ embedded in, an effort is nevertheless made to invoke the relevance of the Kautilyan principles to the broader discipline of bargaining and negotiation analysis. This, therefore, is the departure point for this essay—Bargaining and Negotiation Analysis: Lessons from *Arthashastra*.

In this backdrop, a hermeneutical analysis of the text is undertaken, to arrive at meanings which are comprehensive, coherent and resonate with the philosophical moorings which were behind the reasoning of the Kautilyan idea of state and statecraft. It is argued that the idea of state, as envisaged by Kautilya, and the rationale for statecraft, as envisioned by

him, is not divorced from each other. In fact, the foundational premise of statecraft is built upon the idea of an ‘ideal’ state. The seven constituents of the state (*saptanga* theory) are, in fact, important elements as the strength of the state depends on them. This complementarity is important to understand, as it feeds into the broader understanding of Kautilyan statecraft—the *mandala* theory, where every policy choice is undertaken to advance a very explicitly stated purpose or aim to be achieved. The aim has been explicitly stated in various instances in the text, captured appropriately through the term *yogakshema* that meant welfare of people.

The paper is divided into three broad sections. In the first section, the primary premise on which Kautilya based his argument has been identified. In the second section, certain variables are highlighted to make sense of Kautilyan precepts and principles. The third section offers the lens through which one can appropriately engage with the reconstruction/interpretation of the text both at the level of philosophy and policy.

## **Section One: An Argument on Political Virtue**

While the idea of the state has been interpreted, theorised and problematised in various ways, few have tried theorising the nature of political systems/structures, which existed before the Westphalian notion of the state took roots. Interpreting, problematising the Kautilyan (idea) of a state, could be an effective departure point to introduce the idea of political virtue, which formed a key element behind the Kautilyan principles of statecraft. While introducing the notion of political virtue and juxtaposing it with the Kautilyan thinking might appear a bit anomalous at the outset, notion of ‘political virtue’ does find a place in *Arthashastra*.<sup>1</sup> The notion of political virtue stems from the ends-means debate, whereby certain means are justified on the ground on the ends they serve, and ends here broadly being associated with the enhancement of welfare of the people (*yogakshema*). Political virtue can be defined as *dharma*, a shared norm of just behaviour, which as a concept gives coherence and predictability to people’s life—be it the king, ministers or the general public.<sup>2</sup> The nuances of political virtue as understood through the Kautilyan text not only become evident through the understanding of the seven constituent elements of the state, which need to be guarded to achieve a certain purpose, but also through the notion of

*dharma* which played a functional role in informing the normative basis of the state.

One can interpret the seven constituent elements of the state as the capacity of the state to enforce and implement its decisions. The seven constituents of the state were the *swami*, *amatya*, *janapada*, *durga*, *kosha*, *danda*, *mitra*. While the first six were the internal elements, the seventh was an external element, broadly related to diplomacy. The reason why *saptanga* theory is important to understand is because Kautilya notes that before a king actually sets out an expedition of conquest, he has to take steps to guard himself (read the state) against the dangers, which might weaken any constituents of his own state. The first duty of the King (read national interest) therefore is to protect the people in times of natural disaster and from enemies, both internal and external.<sup>3</sup>

In this respect, keeping the broad aim in mind, three objectives have been identified for the state: wealth, justice, expansion.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that justice formed the central reference point, and was an intermittent connection between *artha* (wealth) followed by expansion (enlargement). As Kautilya himself wrote “wealth followed *dharma*”, material wellbeing was only a part of the larger idea of a state. Kautilya also believed that a stable and prosperous state could only be secured through just administration and that stability and justice preceded (or in other words) were the pre-conditions/prerequisites for accumulation of wealth, which is then used to augment the territory.<sup>5</sup>

While the Kautilyan state was a strong state, be it in terms of trade, security or ordering social relations, there are instructions that *dharma* should be obeyed. However, understanding the role of *danda* (the rod) is important, as it was employed to regulate *dharma*. This is illuminated by studying the nature of social order in ancient India. Bhikhu Parekh writes, “For Hindu political thinkers, the universe is an ordered whole governed by fixed laws. It is characterised by *Rta*-order of things. While society becomes an ordered whole when held together by *dharma*, what shapes the societal *dharma*—is the *karma* of the individual.”<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that the idea of *dharma* and *karma* were deeply related. An important distinction is that individual’s *karma* not only determines his caste but also his *dharma*. *Karma* also defines the rightful *dharma* of the individual. In

this context—the *dharma* of king directed the broad contours of political virtue—the qualities broadly identified with that of a just king.

The idea of political virtue thus gets a very distinct and important meaning in this context. Political virtue advanced the idea of balancing the concept of *dharma* with policy. One can also say that political virtue was also about thinking strategies or crafting policies, which minimised harm to one's own citizens and Kautilya was very categorical in stating that the interest of the state or the population or subjects in general should be prioritised, because if not done so, it could have certain unintended consequences which would be detrimental to the state. The idea of a certain action being based on advancing the idea of larger good thus becomes important. Some of the examples in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which broadly relate to the idea of political virtue and the idea of larger good, are:

*Yogakshema*: Kautilya placed great importance on the welfare of the people and his practical advice to the king on facilitating the happiness of the people was rooted in *dharma*. The advice for the wellbeing of the people was rooted in pragmatism, as he writes, "If people become impoverished, they become greedy and rebellious."<sup>7</sup> Kautilya further points out that internal rebellion is more dangerous than the external one; and therefore the interest of people should always be the priority of the king.

*Artha*: Wealth is the means and not the end. This is what *Arthashastra* tells us. A good example of this is Kautilya's discussion on 'promotion of economic activity'. Kautilya writes that the king should augment his power by promoting the welfare of the people, for power comes from the country side, which is the source of all economic activity.<sup>8</sup>

*Natural calamities, disasters and epidemics*: Kautilya's response to unforeseen calamities is also a pointer to understand how issues of human and socio-economic welfare were prioritised by the state. Kautilya writes, "In times of calamities, the land should not only be capable of sustaining population, but also outsiders, when they come into the kingdom, in times of calamities." Kautilya did foresee the linkage between natural disasters and potential conflicts and epidemics and environmental security came under the ambit of state security. Thus, welfare of the people also included

taking adequate health safety measures, as it was directly linked to the prosperity, stability and security of the state. Similarly, during famines, grains from royal stores were distributed, exemption of taxes was made, public works like road constructions were started for the unemployed, rich were heavily taxed and help from foreign countries was also sought.<sup>9</sup>

A common theme which runs across all the aforementioned points is that state interest is defined broadly in terms of the welfare of the population and justification of national interest is based on the fact that it is an extension of the interests of the people at large and the strength of the state is directly contingent on the welfare of the population.

The enunciation of these principles and their link to the important role of political virtue also become explicit as one contrasts two distinct strands of Hindu political thought—*Dharmashastras* and *Nitishastras*. *Shastras* have broadly been understood as the systematic study of political life. *Shastras* also meant authoritative texts/principles/rules laid down in a treatise with given injunctions. As *Niti* in Sanskrit parlance meant policies, *Nitishastra*, consequently meant an authoritative injunction on policies. Likewise, the term *dandaniti* primarily meant authoritative policies on establishing coercive powers of the government.

*Dharmashastras* referred to a systematic/authoritative treatise on the general principles and detailed content of righteous conduct. Thus, the principles and rules of *dharmashastras* were not just analytical and elucidatory but also authoritative and binding in nature. The *dharmashastra* writers thus concentrated on exploring the *dharma* of individuals and social groups, including the government. They discussed the sources of *dharma*, as well as what was to be done, when these conflicted. The *dharmashastras* also provide a detailed prospectus of duties. Thus, they were didactic and prescriptive.<sup>10</sup>

Given this distinction, it would be interesting to understand the role and place of *Arthashastras* within the *Dharmashastras*. Bhikhu Parekh further provides a distinction between the *Dharmashastras* and *Arthashastra*, which is very insightful. He writes:

In contrast to *Dharmashastras*, the authors of *Arthashastras* were interested in the organisation and mechanisation of *danda*. They

concentrated on the nature and organisation of government, the nature and mechanics of power. The way power is weakened, acquired and lost, the source of threat to government and the best way to deal with them. It would however be a mistake to draw too neat a contrast between the two. While it is true that the authors of *Dharmashastras* are rather moralistic, and those of *Arthashastras* realistic...the former were not particularly naïve and freely acknowledged the political need to disregard moral principles and values under certain circumstances, even as the *Arthashastra* writers acknowledged and insisted on the observance of the *dharmā*. Thus, while the *arthashastra* writers occasionally tended to treat political power as an end in itself, they did not generally lose sight of the moral ends of the government.<sup>11</sup>

The two approaches were thus homologous to each other. They just differed on their subject matter, though the source remained the same—one chose to explore political life from the stand point of *dharmā*, the other from that of *danda*—the difference was thus only in emphasis and orientation. While *dharmashastras* laid down the *dharmā* and was more legalistic and religious in orientation, the *arthashastra* while analysing the structure and functions of government, concentrated on institutions and policies and were secular in orientation. Neither approach was complete in itself and had to be read in reference to the other. This understanding of *Arthashastra*, puts it apart from the concept of political morality as articulated by Hans J. Morgenthau, E.H. Carr, Reinhold Neibuhr and George F. Kennan. All these thinkers are known to have elaborated their view on power and morality.

For instance, E.H. Carr in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* writes, “utopia and reality” are “the two facets of political science”, and therefore, “any sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia and reality.” Carr further wrote, “the utopian fixing his eyes on the future, thinks in terms of creative spontaneity: the realist rooted in the past, in terms of causality. All healthy human action, and therefore all healthy thought, must establish a balance between utopia and reality, between free will and determinism.”<sup>12</sup> He further writes “morality can only be relative not universal. Ethics must be interpreted in terms of politics, and the search for an ethical norm outside politics is doomed in frustration.”<sup>13</sup>

The critical task that Carr set for himself through the concept of utopia and reality was, as Mearsheimer argues, to explain how power and utopia relate to each other. Mearsheimer notes that Carr is not especially helpful in this regard, because he also argues at different points that utopia and reality are incompatible with each other. He writes, for example, “Politics are made up of two elements—utopia and reality—belonging to two different planes which can never meet.”<sup>14</sup> On another note, George F. Kennan has also tried to engage with the debate on foreign policy and morality. In an article, *Morality and Foreign Policy*, Kennan argued that:

The interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality. They arise from the very existence of the national state in question and from the status of national sovereignty it enjoys. They are the unavoidable necessities of a national existence and therefore not subject to classification as either “good” or “bad”. They may be questioned from a detached philosophic point of view. When it accepts the responsibilities of governing, implicit in that acceptance is the assumption that it is right that the state should be sovereign, that the integrity of its political life should be assured, that its people should enjoy the blessings of military security, material prosperity and a reasonable opportunity for...the pursuit of happiness. For these assumptions the government needs no moral justification, nor need it accept any moral reproach for acting on the basis of them.<sup>15</sup>

While at the outset, there might be evident similarities between the notion of political morality as articulated by Carr and Kennan above and the understanding of political virtue as argued by Kautilya, differences do exist. Where the Kautilyan understanding departs from Carr and Kennan, is the link which is established by *Nitishastras* and *Dharmashastras*. In a situation when *dharma* and *niti* contradict each other—*dharma* should provide the direction. Evidence of this can be found in the sources of the law chapter. It says, “Any matter in dispute shall be judged according to the four bases of justice. These in order of increasing importance are: (a) *dharma*, which is based on truth; (b) evidence, which is based on witnesses, (c) custom, i.e. the tradition accepted by the people, and (d) royal edicts, i.e. law as

promulgated.”<sup>16</sup> Also, “whenever there is disagreement between the custom and *dharmashastras* or between the evidence and the *shastras*, the matter shall be decided in accordance with *dharma*.”<sup>17</sup>

Given the relevance of political virtue at the domestic level, it would be interesting to explore the relevance of political virtue in statecraft. What was the role of political virtue? How did it fit into the frames of diplomacy? Perhaps the most proximate understanding to juxtapose political virtue *vis-a-vis* diplomacy is through the concept of framing, which is an important tool for communicating one’s objectives.

Framing has been understood by some authors as “providing meaning through filtering people’s perception so as to provide them a field of vision for a problem.”<sup>18</sup> Initially developed as a tool of analysis in negotiations, Putnam and Holmer define framing as:

Framing and reframing are vital to negotiation process and are tied to information processing, message patterns and socially constructed meanings. Knowing what types of frames are in use and how they are constructed allows one to draw conclusions about how they affect the development of conflict and can be used to influence it.... With this insight and with the help of framing stakeholders may find new ways to reach agreements.<sup>19</sup>

Transposing this understanding to the Kautilyan context, political virtue, in a way provided the ‘moral high ground’ or legitimacy to the *vijigisu* (conqueror). For instance, on waging war, Kautilya writes that even in waging war, it is better to attack an unrighteous king than a righteous one.<sup>20</sup> “Just behaviour also means that the king shall not take land that belonged to his ally, even if it is given to him by somebody else. A king shall also behave in a just manner, towards a king that he has subjugated.”<sup>21</sup> While there are various instances of guided advice sprinkled in the text, the notion of ally and process of formulating pacts can be considered the cornerstone for understanding the Kautilyan vision on statecraft. Since these two elements draw their strength from the *saptanga* theory, notion of political virtue cannot be divorced from the Kautilyan understanding of statecraft. One can say that while the political virtue is the substantive basis of *Arthashastra*; *Rajamandala*—Kautilya’s vision of statecraft—provides

procedural basis for perpetuating state power. It can also be interpreted within the frames of what is desirable *vis-a-vis* what is feasible.

## **To the International: Allies and Pacts**

Importance of alliances and treaties has been underlined by Kautilya. Not only are the Kautilyan insights rare, the centrality of the state around the seven elements has also been pointed out as the purpose and aim identified for statecraft and (any) external engagement is the progress of the state. Rangarajan notes, “The six methods of foreign policy are related to the promotion of the interest of the state.”<sup>22</sup>

Kautilya stipulates that the aim of an alliance is either to consolidate acquisition (remain a dominant power) or to undertake enlargement (expansion) of his kingdom. In order to fulfil the aim, an appropriate method needs to be employed, based on the insights from his state and then choosing appropriately a passive or an active approach. Significantly, while approaches are primarily drawn from six methods of foreign policy,<sup>23</sup> they can be classified into two primary types—peace and war<sup>24</sup>—or perhaps effective means for explicit coordination between allies. While these categories have fine sub-categories, they nevertheless are directed towards fulfilling the primary objective of acquisition or enlargement. For instance, Kautilya writes, “The welfare of a state depends on adopting a foreign policy of non-intervention or overt action.” A policy which helps in the undisturbed enjoyment of the results of past activities is defined as non-intervention. An active policy of enlargement is one which is designed to bring (new initiatives) to a successful conclusion. In this respect, Olivelle cautioning of peace and war not to be taken literally perhaps holds some truth. He further writes, “active and passive policies depend on six methods of foreign policy, which are applied using the constituent methods of state involved.” Applying these policies may result in any of the following: decline, progress or no change in one’s position.

“Condition” and “strategic method” are therefore involved in informing a particular policy. Thus, based on this analysis, principles of alliance building and treaty making have been elicited. Significantly, Kautilya specifies four further methods for perpetuating the power of a conqueror.

These are *sama*, *dana*, *bheda* and *danda*. The former two should be employed for engaging the friend and the latter two are meant for the enemy. The elements of political virtue can be seen in these four methods, with *danda* as the last element, perhaps a factor of legitimacy has been invoked indirectly.

## **Coalition Building: The Significant Ally**

Coalitions are a central tenet for Kautilya, as *mitra* forms one of the seven constituent elements of the state. Alliance or coalition building has a special place in the *Arthashastra*, as it elucidates on the principles of building alliances and the costs of maintaining them. Once the aim is established and the methods identified as per the need and interest of the king (read state), the principles on how one should choose an ally have been determined.

While geography is one of the primary elements in identifying a friend and an enemy (given the contiguity/discontinuity of territory), it is however not a pre-dominant element, and therefore this criterion should not be exaggerated. Rangarajan's own insights into this are most appropriate. He writes, "It must however be emphasized that the circle of kings is not meant to be imagined geographically, as a series of concentric circles, though they may be symbolically represented as such." Intent of the enemy/friend is important and the wisdom to identify one's ally is critical. Who are the actors and what is the intent is therefore the first principle, which should guide the methods for alliance building.

## **Actors and Intent**

While there are twelve<sup>25</sup> actors which have been identified, for clarity five independent actors exist. The five independent actors, which therefore need to be reckoned with, are: the conqueror<sup>26</sup>, the enemy<sup>27</sup>, the ally<sup>28</sup> the middle king<sup>29</sup> and the neutral king.<sup>30</sup> The rest of the categories are classified as per the sequence established for identifying enemies and allies. These actors are important as they act as facilitators to measure the success of diplomacy. The intent of these actors determines the method which needs to be employed. An important pointer in identifying the intent is the motivation

of the actor and its internal cohesiveness—which is embodied in the seven constituent elements. The more proximate a particular state is to the *saptanga* theory, the more susceptible and aware should one become about its motivation.

*Power:* Increasing one's power and increasing one's own happiness is the objective of using power. Actors who increase one's power should therefore be allied with. Intellectual, physical and morale power are three kinds of power. Kautilya also talks about relative power, for the relative power increases the bargaining power of the conqueror. Allies' help increases the relative power of the conqueror. Power also plays an important role in choosing the six methods. The six methods should increase relative power.

*Characteristics of an ally:* Common interest is the first principle for choosing an ally. Ability to help at times of need either through land, money or troops is the second characteristic. Desirable qualities of an ally according to Kautilya are: controllability, constancy, ability to mobilise quietly and having troops concentrated at one place. The latter two can be read as one who has internal control and power, i.e. has all the six constituents (other than the king) of a state in place. Of controllability and constancy, the former is always preferred, as it increases the conqueror's relative power. However, between two allies, with one promising constancy but little help and the other controllable by little help, the former has to be preferred, as it is more sustainable. How short and long term interests are also reconciled in the choice of choosing an ally is insightful. Actors need not be chosen on the basis of uni-dimensional criteria, but actors need to be matched with their strengths and interests of the conqueror.

*Typology of allies:* Allies are divided into dangerous allies, worthy allies, best ally. While intent and motivation are the key criteria, the best ally is one who has following qualities—an ally of the family for a long time, constant, amenable to control, powerful in his support, sharing a common interest, able to mobilise his forces and not a man who betrays. The utility of the ally is also a key criterion. There are allies of diverse utility—one who helps in many ways with the products, the one of greater utility who gives substantial help with forces/treasury, and the all-round help—one who helps with troops, treasury and land. Reconciling typology with

characteristics is indeed interesting. A parallel can be drawn to the debates existing around the literature on coalition/alliance building. If one casts a brief look, the principle of alliance building remains the same. Alliances in diplomatic parlance are also termed as coalition building, which is defined as “as set of governments that defend a common position in negotiation, through explicit coordination.”<sup>31</sup> Two types of alliances have broadly found their place in negotiation literature—bloc type<sup>32</sup> versus issue-based,<sup>33</sup> and balance<sup>34</sup> versus bandwagons.<sup>35</sup> How these calculations are played out by Kautilya can well be made out, by his extensive elaboration of typologies and stipulations on the principle of alliance building.

## **Treaty Making Power**

International agreements are broadly defined as efforts to sustain international cooperation.<sup>36</sup> While there is much available literature on the process of Treaty Making, some of the main elements which have been emphasised by various authors include pre-negotiation, negotiation, ratification, implementation and renegotiation. While neat phases as these are difficult to find in *Arthashastra*, some of these do find an interesting reflection in the text. Treaty making is an auxiliary of alliance building.

Treaty making, as existing in the Kautilyan text, is an extension for sustaining allies and maintaining the balance of power which is necessary for perpetuating the dominant position exercised by the conqueror (*vijigisu*). Power finds an important place in Kautilyan statecraft, and is emphasised in terms of being defined in terms of relative power. Relative power, Kautilya argued, enhanced bargaining power, which determined the nature of trade-offs delineated conditions for making the treaty and to a certain extent established the terms of the alliance building.

The purpose of entering into pacts of formulating treaties has been specified by Kautilya, which he argued was to create confidence between the two kings. Non-intervention, negotiating a peace treaty and making peace by giving a hostage—all meant the same thing for Kautilya, since the aim of all three was to create confidence between all kings. Whether the peace will be stable or not depends on the element of political virtue. Rangarajan writes, “Kautilya prefers agreement based solely on honour.”<sup>37</sup>

The eminence of political virtue in treaty making is revealed through the preference of agreements made on the word of honour. While many contemporaries of Kautilya believed that agreements made on the word of honour could be unstable, Kautilya believed that an agreement made on oath or on word of honour is stable in this world and in the next. He reasons out, “An agreement which depends on the surety or a hostage is valid only in this world since its observance depends on the relative strength of the parties making it.”<sup>38</sup> He further adds, “If there was any doubt about the swearer being true to his oath, the pact was made with great men, ascetics or the chiefs standing as surety (guarantee its observance).”<sup>39</sup> The notion of good offices being used and the notion of *dharma* acting as a restraint on behaviour is thus underlined.

Types of treaties have been articulated by Kautilya. These are treaties with obligation and treaties without conditions. Treaties without conditions are meant for enemies to create a sense of confidence. The objective is to neutralise them but nevertheless wait for the opportune time to exploit them. Treaty without conditions, therefore, emphasise the point that allies are important. Treaties with obligations need to be negotiated keeping in mind the variables of time, place and objectives.<sup>40</sup> A detailed reading of these variables underlines the importance of terrain, climate/weather and purpose.<sup>41</sup>

### **Renegotiating the Treaty**

Aspect of renegotiation is important as it is embedded in the notion of fairness and equity, fear, lack of employment and resentment. Since sustaining allies is an important parameter of foreign policy, it is advised that treaties are just. Thus, renegotiating a treaty seems to have an element of political virtue. Motives have to be taken into account for renegotiation. Intent and motivation also need to be viewed against the virtues of the party which has put the demand for renegotiation. Bargaining power has special place in renegotiating treaties. A king’s bargaining power may be dependent on certain conditions, particularly calamities. Calamities relate to the weaknesses which corrupt the seven constituent elements of the *saptanga* theory, which implies that the capacity of the state built on these elements is considered an important criterion.

## Unequal Treaties

“Unequal Treaties” find a special mention in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, where Kautilya stipulates when to negotiate an unequal treaty. While he does talk about payment based on pure bargaining power, he is aware that in politics mathematical calculations do not work. Kautilya therefore suggests that “one should take into account the overall benefit which includes the immediate gain as well as the potential future gain. Sometimes, it may even be advisable to forego any apparent benefits.”<sup>42</sup>

The small benefit, as against the large future benefit, is captured well in the notion of diffused *vis-a-vis* specific reciprocity. Robert Keohane specifies that there are two ways to understand reciprocity. The first is through the concept of *specific reciprocity* and the second is through the concept of *diffused reciprocity*. While the former implies situations in which partners exchange items of equivalence value in a defined sequence, the latter term implies a situation in which definition of equivalence is less precise and the sequence of events is much narrowly bounded.<sup>43</sup> The latter is much dependent on expected benefits which can be reaped in future and evolves over period of time from sustained cooperation between actors. In other words, diffused reciprocity takes place under the influence of institutionalised trust.

Since the primary purpose of Kautilyan foreign policy is maintenance of allies, diffused and specific reciprocity appropriately fits the frame within which Kautilya envisaged the rationale for unequal treaties.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, one can conclude that Kautilyan diplomacy can be understood within a distinct framework of *purusharthas*. *Purusharthas* should be starting point for studying and interpreting *Arthashastra* because the text is a part of Indian philosophy. *Purusharthas*, as defined by Rangarajan, is a great aim of human endeavour, and has been classified as four—*dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*, roughly translated as moral behaviour, wealth, worldly pleasures and salvation. The pursuit of three—*dharma*, *artha* and *kama* can contribute to *moksha*. The understanding of *dharma*—which when understood in the context of

*Arthashastra* has been termed as ‘political virtue’—nevertheless is important because it occupies a significant place. The definition of *dharma* is most appropriately laid by Rangarajan. He writes, “*Dharma* not only signifies an absolute and immutable concept of righteousness but also includes the idea of duty which every human being owes to himself, to one’s ancestors, to society as a whole and to universal order. *Dharma* is the law in widest sense—spiritual, moral, ethical and temporal.”<sup>44</sup>

This view gets corroborated by Anthony J. Parel, who writes, “...the overall aim of political science was to create the cultural conditions necessary for the pursuit for the four great ends of life—ethical goodness (*dharma*), wealth and power (*artha*), pleasure (*kama*) and spiritual transcendence (*moksha*).”<sup>45</sup> He further writes:

*Arthashastra* opens the discussion of the science of politics with a wider discussion of the necessity of the three other sciences known in its day. Such a holistic approach to political science is noteworthy in itself. The sciences mentioned, in the order presented, were philosophy (*anvikshiki*), the Vedas, economics and political science. The implication was that political science though necessary, was not sufficient to bring about all the conditions necessary for human flourishing. The latter required the contributions of the other sciences mentioned and political science from the very start was necessarily mindful of this.<sup>46</sup>

Given the interpretation of the text within this rubric, *dharma* thus is illustrated as a distinct strand of Kautilyan diplomacy. Framing Kautilya as a realist, where material gains are emphasised over the ideational and spiritual is thus misplaced. While Kautilya very much considers *artha* as essential, the idea of state and his definition of progress and decline need to be kept in mind before any overtures are made to interpret the *mandala* theory, which usually becomes the departure point for understanding statecraft as preached by Kautilya.

## NOTES

1. This argument was elaborated in my previous paper, presented at IDSA. See: Medha Bisht, “Revisiting the Arthashastra: Back to Understanding IR”, paper presented at Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, October 8, 2013; and published in Vol. II. The first section of this paper heavily draws from it.

2. Gurcharan Das, *India Grows at Night: The Liberal Case for a Strong State*, Penguin Books, Delhi, 2013, p. 92.
3. L.N. Rangarajan, *Kautilya: The Arthashastra*, Penguin Books, London, 1987, p. 43.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Bhikhu Parekh, "Some Reflection on Hindu Tradition of Political Thought", in Fred Dallmayr (ed.), *Comparative Political Theory: An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
7. L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 133.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
9. B.P. Sinha, *Readings in Arthashastra*, Agam Prakashan, Delhi, 1971, p. 11.
10. Bhikhu Parekh, note 6, 2010, p. 108.
11. *Ibid.*
12. E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, Macmillan Press, London, 1981, p. 10.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
14. John Mearsheimer, "E.H. Carr vs Idealism: The Battle Rages on", *International Relations*, 19(2), 2005, pp. 139-152.
15. George F. Kennan, "Morality and Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, 46(2), Winter 1985, p. 206.
16. L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 380, [3.1.39-40].
17. *Ibid.*, [3.1.43-45].
18. Sanda Kaufman, Michael Elliott and Deborah Shmueli, "Frames, Framing and Reframing", *Beyond Intractability*, at <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/framing>; Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (eds.), *Conflict Information Consortium*, University of Colorado, Boulder, Posted in September 2003.
19. L. Putnam and M. Holmer, "Framing, Reframing, and Issue Development", in L. Putnam and M.E. Roloff (eds.), *Communication and Negotiation*, Sage, Newbury Park, 1992, Vol. 20, pp. 128-155, cited in Sanda Kaufman, Michael Elliott and Deborah Shmueli, "Frames, Framing and Reframing", *Beyond Intractability*, at <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/framing>; Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (eds.), *Conflict Information Consortium*, University of Colorado, Boulder, Posted in September 2003.
20. L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 548, [7.13.11-12].
21. *Ibid.*, [7.16.17, 19-23, 28].
22. *Ibid.*, p. 509.
23. The six methods are: *samdhi*—making peace or entering into an agreement for either maintaining a status quo or for enlargement purposes; *vigraha* is either open war or secret/undeclared war; *Asana* and *Yana*—these two methods are the extension of peace or war. *Asana* means staying quiet and *yana* means march for war. These are broadly tactics, identifying to the strategies of either peace or war identified by the conqueror. *Samsraya* and *dvaidhibhava* are either seeking protection when threatened or making peace with a neighbouring king in order to pursue a policy of hostility towards another.
24. Patrick Olivelle disputes the meaning of *samdhi* (peace) and *vigraha* (war). He argues

that *vigraha* is a political strategy rather than actual warfare—it is an act of declaring war rather than actual fighting. It is a hostile act or initiation of hostilities. It is a strategy to weaken the enemy through various means. Peace (*samdhi*), on the other hand, is again a tactical strategy seeking advantage over other king—alliance or pact for outwitting the other. See: Patrick Olivelle, “War and Peace: Semantics of Samdhi and Vigraha in the Arthashastra”, in Tikkanen and Butters (eds.), *Pūrvāparaprajñābhinandanam—East and West, Past and Present: Indological and Other Essays in Honour of Klaus Kattunen*, Studia Orientalia, Helsingfors, 2011.

25. *Ari/Shatru*—Antagonist/Enemy; *Mitra*—friend/Ally; *Ari-Mitra*—Enemy’s ally; *Mitra-Mitra*—friend of an Ally; *Ari-Mitra-Mitra*—Enemy’s ally’s friend; *Parshnigraha*—enemy in the rear; *Aakranda*—ally in the rear; *Parshnigrahasara*—rear enemy’s ally; *Aakrandasara*—rear ally’s friend; *Antarshi*—weak intervening king; *Udasina*—neutral king; *Madhyama*—middle king.
26. Conqueror is a king ready for enlargement. The prerequisite for being a conqueror is a king, who has excellent personal qualities, resources and constituents of his state and follows good policies.
27. Enemy or an antagonist is defined as a king, whose kingdom shares a common border. However, these not all the kingdoms are enemies worth the attention, as a king *deemed* to be an antagonist is the one, who has powerful excellent personal qualities, resources and constituents. There are vulnerable enemies—the one inflicted by a calamity. One who is weak and without support is a destroyable antagonist; and one that has support is an antagonist and can be weakened. Of the most dangerous of all is an ‘antagonist by intent’. The characteristics of a destroyable antagonist are: greedy, vicious, trusting in fate, unjust behavior, does harm to others, has mean *mantriparishad*, with unhappy subjects, powerless or helpless. Note the elements of unjust behaviour as one characteristic which weakens the enemy. The inimical neighbours are soulless enemy with intent of harming the neighbour. Enemy in the rear allied with enemy in the front is a potential source of threat. Enemy is also one who has suffered a calamity and is vulnerable to the attack of a conqueror. The state attacking the conqueror, taking advantage of the latter’s calamity is also an enemy.
28. Ally is a king whose territory has a common border with an antagonist. A natural ally is one who is noble by birth or related to the conqueror. An ally by intent is one who needs the conqueror for wealth or personal safety. Interestingly, Kautilya adds that kinship can be a source of enmity or friendship. Common interest may bring them together and opposing interest may make them enemies. An ally is thus defined as one with the same objective. Vassal neighbours who can be controlled are also allies.
29. Middle King is the one whose territory is contiguous to that of the conqueror and the conqueror’s enemy, who is powerful enough to help them, whether they are united or not, or to destroy them individually when they are disunited. Middle king is important because it can influence the balance of power between two groups—the conqueror and his friends on one hand and enemy and his friends on the other.
30. A neutral king is one whose territory is not contiguous with those of the conqueror, and the conqueror’s enemy, or the middle king (totally outside the area of hostilities)

who is stronger than the three and powerful enough to help the three, whether they are united or not, or to destroy them individually when they are not.

31. Cited in Amrita Narlikar. Some of the goals mentioned for coalition building as specified by Narlikar are: First, attempts to block a proposal; second, the role of division of labour and information exchange; third, cultivating allies increases one's bargaining strength, as one improves one's BATNA, which is the Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement, and therefore can pose a considerable weight in negotiations to block the opponent. See: Amrita Narlikar, "Bargaining over the Doha Development Agenda: Coalitions in the World Trade Organization", *Serie LATN Papers*, N 34.
32. Bloc type coalitions consist of likeminded states, united by a common identity and shared beliefs that usually transcend issue specificities. These coalitions adopt collective positions, over a range of issue areas and over time. See: Amrita Narlikar, "Negotiating the Rise of New Powers", *International Affairs*, 89(3), 2013, pp. 561-576.
33. Bloc type coalitions are formed to address a particular and immediate problem, they tend to disintegrate more easily, either because the threat has been responded too, or because members are faced with threats of greater concern to them in other issue areas and shift their allegiances accordingly. See: Amrita Narlikar, "Negotiating the Rise of New Powers", *International Affairs*, 89(3), 2013, pp. 561-576.
34. Balancing is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat. In balancing, states are more secure, because aggressors will face combined opposition. States choose to balance for two main reasons. First, they place their survival at risk if they fail to curb a potential hegemon before it becomes too strong. To ally with a dominant power means placing ones trust in continued benevolence. The safer strategy is to align with those who cannot readily dominate their allies, in order to avoid being dominated by those who can. Second, joining the weaker side increases the new members influence within the alliance, because the weaker side has greater need for assistance. Allying with the stronger side by contrast gives the new member little influence (because it adds relatively less to the coalition) and leaves it vulnerable to the whims of its partners. See: Stephen Walt, *The Origin of Alliances*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1987, pp. 100-104.
35. Bandwagoning refers to an alignment with the source of danger. When bandwagoning is the dominant tendency, then security is scarce, because successful aggressors will attract additional allies, enhancing their power, while reducing the power of opponents. See: Stephen Walt, *The Origin of Alliances*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1987, pp. 100-104.
36. Scott Barrett, "On the Theory and Diplomacy of Environmental Treaty Making", *Environmental and Resource Politics*, 11(3-4), 1998, pp. 317-333.
37. L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 543.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 544.
39. *Ibid.*
40. There are all, together, seven kinds of treaties based on: time, place and objectives; time and place; time and objectives; place and objectives; place alone; time alone; objective alone.

41. Place is about knowing the geography. An unfavorable territory is well protected by mountains, jungle and river forts, surrounded by forests, reliability of supply, which is uncharted or far away and terrain unsuitable for military operations. A treaty about place is therefore in which the signatories know beforehand that each one will attack a different specified region. Treaty about time is one in which the signatories agree beforehand that each will conduct his campaign for a specified duration. A treaty with objectives is one in which each signatory agrees beforehand that each will conduct the campaign for a specified objective. Other kings' gains should have adverse consequences and while the gains of the *vijigisu* king are more durable. Adverse consequences are defined as: gains which are easily recovered, the operation enrages the people, takes too long, involves heavy losses or expenses, results in paltry gains, creates more trouble in future, is based on *adharmā*, antagonises the neutral and middle king and ruins his own ally. See: L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 545.
42. L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 550.
43. Robert O. Keohane, "Reciprocity in International Relations", *International Organisation*, 40(1), 1986, p. 4.
44. L.N. Rangarajan, note 3, p. 1.
45. Anthony J. Parel, "Gandhi and the Emergence of Modern Indian Political Canon", *The Review of Politics*, 70, 2008, p. 41.
46. *Ibid.*

# 7

## Does Indian IR have a History? Mapping Articulations of Justice and Stability in the *Arthashastra* and *Akhlaq* Traditions\*

*Jayashree Vivekanandan*

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The question as to whether or not Indian ‘International Relations’ (IR) has a history may appear somewhat rhetorical given that the mandate of this anthology is ostensibly about how Indians strategised in ancient India. Perhaps it is best to qualify that Indian IR is not about *a history* but many histories, ones that do not necessarily form a coherent whole. And yet, theories would seek patterns in state behaviour, diplomatic practices and role of ethics in statecraft or lack thereof. But in doing so, it is vital to contextualise theoreticians, philosophers and strategists within the times they lived and wrote in. Attentiveness to context pushes us to take a long view of strategic history and helps put their contributions in perspective; how were others living in different time frames and circumstances thinking about similar issues? Since much of Kautilya’s views on statecraft have already been commendably analysed, the essay takes this existing body of literature as the point of departure.

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\* This paper is drawn from my book, *Interrogating International Relations: India’s Strategic Practice and the Return of History*, Routledge, New Delhi and London, 2011.

The paper attempts a comparison between two traditions that dominated the ancient and medieval periods in India and their divergent interpretations of the notions of justice and social order. The ancient *arthashastra* tradition, to which Kautilya's *Arthashastra* belongs, upheld the theory of contractual kingship and stressed on the centrality of outcome, thereby espousing an instrumentalist approach to justice. The *akhlaq* tradition of the medieval period, on the other hand, upheld the notion of procedural justice. The entire state apparatus was to be devoted to the pursuit of a liberal conception of justice, understood as a dynamic state of harmonious balance in society among contending groups. The paper argues that notwithstanding their contrasting articulations, both traditions converge at certain points in terms of the implications these held for social order and stability. Both seek to socially contextualise kingship in ways that make the institution indispensable to the preservation of social order. They also offer conceptualisations of stability not bound by territoriality but predicated on measures that obviate the use of force. The paper, in examining their respective visions of political and social order, mounts a critique of ahistorical and asocial interpretations of the state often encountered in IR and stresses on the compelling need to locate supposedly 'neutral' notions such as justice and stability within socio-historical contexts.

### **Interpreting Indian History through Traditions**

A long view of a country's strategic past reveals that certain traditions were formulated on the manner in which political space was to be organised, controlled and defended. These traditions are best seen as successful and optimal responses to the challenges to state power prevalent at a particular time. In Indian strategic thought, the realist tradition that focused on the calculated acquisition and exercise of power is juxtaposed with the moralist tradition, which stressed on the ethical dimensions of power such as peace and justice.<sup>1</sup> The two traditions trace their lineage to two conflicting notions of the state that are expounded in classical texts. The *nitishastra* texts conceive of the state as a managerial, unitary and bureaucratised entity capable of attaining power (*artha*). Kautilya's 'circle of kings' was one such response, given the fractured political environment he wrote in. A response strategy at variance with Kautilya's calculative king focused on the just ruler whose primary role was to maintain the rule of *dharma* on

which his society was based. In this alternative conception, the basis of kingship is primarily ethical and religious (*dharma*) supported by a network of personal relationships.<sup>2</sup> The two contending philosophical strains are discernible in the epics and texts down the ages, although the extent to which each succeeded in influencing the strategic practice of kings varied. However, what can be stated in unambiguous terms is that Indians down history have not only known how to strategise but have also negotiated and mediated security problems in diverse ways.

A notable attribute of India's philosophical literature (taken as the mainstay by strategic culturalists) is the marked paucity of treatises devoted to military affairs. If a researcher were to embark upon a search for historical military texts, she would come upon few other than the *Arthashastra*.<sup>3</sup> However, a more rigorous search would yield a richer repertoire in the extant epics and Vedic texts that contain incisive references to military and political affairs, strategising and war-making. That the bulk of such material is couched in ostensibly religious and sacred literature perhaps indicates a self-conscious desire to define security in holistic terms. This was particularly the case with the moralist tradition rather than with the realist strand, which tended to produce treatises such as the *Arthashastra* that dealt more directly with state security. Although the identification of a distinct strategic culture may be difficult in India's case, its underlying emphasis on firmly locating the state within the larger social milieu is instructive.

The two traditions were in a way responding to the prevailing political climate in ancient India. Political fragmentation was the norm during the ancient and medieval periods, but this however did not imply political chaos as is commonly assumed. Indeed, although ancient India was fragmented into multiple kingdoms, the political landscape formed a chequered board on which Kautilya based his well-developed network of alternating relations of alliance and enmity. Sovereignty in India was a nebulous concept that did not entail the clear demarcation of the king's political realm. Since theoretically, the authority of the king was universal (given that he was seen as the microcosm of the entire cosmos), making a distinction between the internal and the external domains was self-limiting. The logic of the all-encompassing authority of the king extended to the use of force as well. A dualistic understanding of the use of force (of seeing internal violence

as sedition and external force as war) was likewise absent in Indian theorisations. Thus, the strategies employed in war against external enemies were similar to those against internal opponents.<sup>4</sup>

The *arthashastra* tradition that refers to a rich body of literature comprising texts such as Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, Kamandaki's *Nitisara* and the *Barhaspatya Sutra* stress on the centrality of the outcome, thereby making the use of ethical and unethical means justifiable. The *Ramayana's* 6000 references to military action potentially qualify it as yet another treatise of the *arthashastra* tradition. The taxonomy of military strategies of conciliation, bribery, sowing dissension and coercion in the *Ramayana* coincide with the broader classification arrived at by Kautilya.<sup>5</sup> The decline in the use of military strategies, prudence in war, and the dominance of the notion of chivalry extolling death in war, are regarded by some researchers as the causes behind the inability of Hindus to effectively oppose the invading Muslim armies. Yet, the discourse on prudence was not altogether overshadowed by the moralist tradition, which the *dharmashastra* literature in the Middle Ages was part of. Somadeva Suri, a Jain teacher upheld prudence over heroism in his work, *Yashastilaka*. The notion of treacherous warfare (*kutayuddha*), which is denounced in the *dharmashastra* literature as unethical is advocated by Somadeva, and is indeed one of the underlying principles of the *arthashastra* theory.<sup>6</sup>

The moralist tradition sought to differentiate between the enemy and the conflict situation and placed a high premium on moral concerns which eventually were to inform the conduct of war. While the tradition's engagement with the discourse on justice and ethical conduct is traceable to the ancient period, we encounter its sustained preoccupation with these concerns in the medieval period as well. The *akhlaq* literature needs to be seen as an extension of this sensibility as its normative underpinnings undoubtedly draw from the stock of moralist writings that preceded it.

## **The *Akhlaq* Literature and its Strategic Relevance**

The consciousness that Muslim subjects remained in minority in medieval India while the Muslim political elite ruled over a population predominantly Hindu, spawned two parallel traditions in Indo-Islamic thought. On the one

hand, it led to the growth of the orthodox strain that was acutely conscious of the vulnerable position of the Indian Muslims in the early periods. On the other hand, it yielded the liberal tradition that was committed to devising means of establishing communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims.<sup>7</sup> The central issue that occupied the advocates of both dispositions was the extent to which the powers and duties of the ruler were to be circumscribed by the strictures of the *Sharia*. An attendant concern was the status of non-Muslims within an Islamic state in terms of their duties and prerogatives.<sup>8</sup> The classical interpretation saw the king as primarily the ruler and representative of Muslim subjects. The reformist tradition accorded a more enabling role to religion in political affairs, and called upon it “to illustrate, and...support...the universal human ideals.” Ordinarily, the status of Hindus was that of ‘non-Arab idolaters’ who were to abide by the strictures enumerated for infidels in the *Sharia*. However, political realities tempered this theoretical position which caused Muslim rulers to variously implement the *Sharia* regulations. A continuum ranging from staunch orthodoxy to a conciliatory approach to Hindu subjects in the medieval era is discernible.<sup>9</sup>

The texts as part of the *akhlaq* literature relied on religious arguments to gain credibility, while attempting at the same time to redefine the norms governing kingship and political norms. They presented an essentially non-Islamic political discourse in Islamic terms, drawing on the established and widely recognised grammar of religion (*din*) and the *Sharia*. But the arguments that the religious rhetoric was used in support of, and the conclusions that were arrived at, were vastly different from the central tenets of the classical tradition followed in Islamic law books. For instance, the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* despite affirming the importance accorded to religion in the *Sharia*, effectively challenges the narrow role ascribed by it to the king as a Muslim ruler concerned primarily with the interests of the Muslim community.<sup>10</sup> Alam observes that the objective of the treatises was:

...to provide cures for ‘character defects’ ...and thus prepare healthy individuals to develop a stable social order....The *akhlaq* literature, thus represents some of the best examples of appropriation in the medieval Muslim intellectual world, of otherwise non-Islamic (and strictly juristically, in some instances, even anti-Islamic) ideas.<sup>11</sup>

In *akhlaq* literature, the check on the monarchy was not extraneous to

the ruler but inherent to the very nature of his duties. An abiding concern with justice that informed the position and duties of the king was an effective means of constraining his powers. The lofty principles of peace and justice were invoked to mould kingship into a responsive and unifying institution. The literature propounded a rational view of justice, according to which its latent virtues were revealed to human understanding through reason. This assertion of *akhlaqi* norms was significant for they ceased to draw their relevance and sustenance from any religious interpretation but were upheld for their intrinsic value. Justice was understood in *akhlaq* literature to imply a dynamic state of harmonious balance in society among contending groups. The entire apparatus of the state and its resources were to be devoted to the pursuit of this secular conception of justice. Likewise, the early Muslim rulers conformed to the norms of righteous behaviour expected of victors which were enumerated in ancient Sanskrit texts. For instance, the notion of *dharmavijaya* stating that the vanquished ruler should be reinstated in his kingdom upon his defeat was generally observed by victorious Muslim kings. Upon eliciting formal submission and a consent to pay the stipulated tribute, the Muslim rulers left the domain of the defeated king largely undisturbed.<sup>12</sup> It led Burton Stein to characterise the medieval Indian state as ‘custodial’ since it did not “arrogate to itself and attempt to monopolise the coercive functions and authority of other, essentially non-political institutions in society.”<sup>13</sup>

Deviations from the conventional opinion drew upon the Persian and Greek political discourses, and among the texts that propounded an alternative theory of political norms was Khwaja Nasir ud-Din Tusi’s *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* composed in 1235 CE. The influence of Greek thought was evident in Tusi’s conceptualisation of the ruler as the philosopher king whose duty was to oversee the development of all individuals, irrespective of their social identity. The *Akhlaq-i Humayuni*, compiled by Ikhtiyar-al-Husaini during the Mughal emperor Babur’s reign, similarly asserts that “[t]he perfection of man...is impossible to achieve without a peaceful social organisation, where everyone could earn his living by cooperation and helping each other.” The text recognises the need to locate individuals within their larger social environment. Despite its Quranic citations, the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* does not remain limited within the confines of a narrow religious

debate, and instead makes a determined pitch for universalism when it comes to justice and peace.<sup>14</sup> Al-Husaini further adds:

The affairs of living thus must be administered through cooperation...which in turn depends on justice.... If [justice] disappears each will then follow his own desire. Therefore there has to be an institute...and a balancing agency...to ensure the cooperation. *Sharia*, the protectors of which have been the prophets...serves this purpose. But *Sharia* cannot work without it being administered by a just king, whose principal duty is to bring the people in control with affection and favours.<sup>15</sup>

The *Akhlaq-i Humayuni*, much in the genre of *akhlaq* literature, sought to ensure the acceptability of ideas that lay outside the narrow juridical interpretation of the *Sharia* by skilfully cloaking it in religious rhetoric. The treatise was held in high regard by emperor Akbar who not only listened to the injunctions and theorisations given in Tusi's *Akhlaq* on Abul Fazl's advice, but also ordered his officials to read it regularly. The philosophy of *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* was deeply engrained in the Mughal approach to politics. As Alam notes:

The influence of Ikhtiyar al-Husaini's *Akhlaq* is unmistakable on their [Mughals'] religious and political views as well as their actual politics. Babur's descendants in India sought stability, as al-Husaini had desired, by harmonizing their political actions with the *akhlaqi* norms of governance...<sup>16</sup>

The affinity between Fazl's opinion and *akhlaqi* ethics on the role of reason and the position of the ruler is therefore not surprising. The Mughals were attentive to the concerns of the diverse social groups that made up their empire, and one of the initiatives Akbar took in this regard was to patronise the official translation of ancient Indian texts. The *akhlaqi* emphasis on reason as the path to justice is amply evident in Fazl's argument that the translations encouraged people to "refrain from hostility...seek truth, find out each other's virtues and vices and endeavour to correct themselves."<sup>17</sup> By patronising translations of Hindu texts, Akbar and his successors were also according importance and recognition to the pre-Islamic phase of Indian history to which these texts belonged. In a sense, the official project

‘secularised’ the reading of history by expanding its ambit further back in time than an Islamic reading would render.<sup>18</sup> Friedmann observes that:

...it is clear that Akbar’s policies created an atmosphere in which the belief in the exclusive truth of Islam was substantially undermined. The willingness of Akbar to admit Hindu sages into his presence and to listen to their religious discourses implied that their views were worthy of consideration....The classical conviction that Islam is the only true religion...lost its axiomatic nature, and the way was opened for the development of conciliatory attitudes towards Hinduism.<sup>19</sup>

The emperor’s eagerness to engage religious leaders in debates can be read in a different light. Patronising court discussions on diverse issues was one of the many sources of information that Indian kings tapped, grounded as they were in social networks. Engagement with socio-religious groups as a means to gaining information is particularly notable during Akbar’s reign when his extensive interaction with Hindu pundits yielded detailed and meticulous descriptions of kingship, rituals and cosmology under Hinduism. The official channel was supplemented by what Bayly calls the ‘patrimonial knowledge’ of specific regions which rulers gained from chiefs. Kings also sought access to ‘affective knowledge’ through “participation in communities of belief and marriage, through religious affiliation and association with holy men, seers, astrologers and physicians.”<sup>20</sup> The king’s personal participation in these exercises was in keeping with his image as the upholder of order in society, although communities were left to arbitrate on moral issues. These self-regulating social mechanisms probably explain why active state intervention in carrying out religious persecutions and controlling heretical practices that occurred in early modern Europe and Shia Iran did not take place in India.

Another key text within the *akhlaq* literature was *Akhlaq-i Jahangiri* by Nurud-Din Qazi, for whom the principle of justice was the overriding concern in matters of governance. The liberal tradition’s most committed proponent, Mughal prince Dara Shukoh (1615-59 CE) considered Hinduism and Islam to be complementary and compatible. Dara argued that complementarities emerge from the religious principle of monotheism that is upheld in all the holy books, including the *Bible*, the *Quran* and the *Vedas*.

Of all the holy books, the religious truth was to him most well-enunciated and explicit in the *Upanishads* and for that very reason was to serve as a template to better understand the *Quran*. Dara's thesis of grasping the essence of the *Quran* with the aid of a Hindu scripture was a radical notion that challenged the self-referential nature of Islam.<sup>21</sup>

It was this potential for complementarities and mutual learning between the two traditions that the *akhlaq* literature sought to explore. What is noteworthy about this genre is that it couched radical notions in politically and religiously acceptable terms that made the pursuit of universal principles like justice and peace a commendable exercise. The Mughals unreservedly drew upon this tradition of liberal writings, which not only offered the king practical injunctions in matters of statecraft, but crucially moulded their disposition towards accommodation and conciliation.

## **Indian IR: Retrieving by Historicising**

Cultural replication and ritual sovereignty were vital processes of state formation in Asian polities, which extended beyond the state's formal institutions. The western notion of state monopoly of force needs to be problematised, since historically Asian polities were akin to intercontinental empires, unlike Europe's nation-states. Susanne Rudolph suggests an alternative framework of a custodial state ruling over the various mechanisms of a 'self-regulating' society such as castes, regions and religious communities. Indian grand strategies of any hue, whether accommodationist, offensive or defensive, sought to undergird the notion of security within the larger normative framework of good life, harmony and stability. Importantly, the ethical underpinning of security resonated well with the image of the king as the keeper of societal values and the balancer of conflicting forces. At the operational level, the wide array of strategies at the disposal of the state was logical, given the diverse and diffuse nature of threats to its security. While none of the prescribed measures were in any way uniquely Indian, a taxonomy that prioritised negotiation, compromise and sedition over the resort to force has endured as an abiding feature of India's strategic practice.

This is not to tow the much-favoured culturalist line of argument that

Indians are culturally programmed to exhaust options of peaceable co-existence. The claim that political fragmentation was a regressive condition in India that led to chaos can be traced to the normative appeal of the modern state for its absolute control over territory. Fragmented territories with fungible boundaries were the prevalent norm in the ancient and medieval periods, and were hardly unique to India. Both strategic traditions directed the king to vanquish and not annihilate his enemies, quite simply because there were too many to engage with in futile and costly endeavours. Leaving the domain of the vanquished ruler undisturbed in return for his submission was an eminently desirable political arrangement. Thus, we see the familiar picture of the king withdrawing to rule from his designated capital after extracting the assurance of recognition and submission from the local ruler.<sup>22</sup> The *modus operandi* was in no way idealistic and politically naïve; just very practical and well-suited to the conditions that ambitious kings had to deal with.

This paper will probably leave many questions unanswered, particularly those pertaining to the existing status of the strategic traditions mentioned above. Tracing traditions across eras is no less hazardous than delineating the essential elements of a strategic culture down history. Culture transmutes and transforms in every age. To assume that a single culture operated for the whole of India or that there existed no tradition of strategic thinking are dangerous propositions. Traditions last because the conditions supporting them do; they change or recede when those conditions are radically transformed. A tradition that suited the imperatives of a particular time period did not appear appropriate in another, causing it to recede behind a more astute strategy. The interplay of these response strategies is rooted in culture insofar as the language and the metaphors employed belonged to a particular cultural milieu.<sup>23</sup> The cultural tropes and practices resorted to, for the legitimisation of power, are resonant of a certain way of life unique to that societal context alone.

History, in that sense, permits us to conceptualise culture in dynamic terms. One can put forward a set of tentative assumptions on how culture may have impacted strategic thinking in India. It gradually gave rise to a consciousness of the antiquity of the country, and this awareness was reflected in myriad ways in the writings of different ages. For instance,

rulers through history routinely exalted the greatness of this land, the conquest of which was seen as a feat of the mighty. It has variously been described as the land of plenty inhabited by people with pleasing countenance. The appeal had a lot to do with the fertile plains in the north and the trade routes that Indians straddled. But the association of the subcontinent with significance, enormity and achievement was an abiding subject of interest for writers in ancient, medieval and colonial India. The consciousness assumed patriotic dimensions under the nationalists who took recourse to history to demonstrate their pride and loyalty for the country.

The dramatic transformation in India's case came with the advent of colonialism that, barring the brief period of lingering influences following the transfer of power, marked the sundering of existing power relations among the indigenous elite. Technological advancements coupled with the colonial overlay redefined the whole notion of the empire and the manner in which it came to be administered.<sup>24</sup> The empire was now more organised and elaborate than its ancient and medieval manifestations, and increasing regularisation in the functioning of the state apparatus implied that projecting power over distances was no longer the challenge it had been in the past. The two traditions may have effectively receded into the past but the debates they spawned on state-society relations, the legitimacy of force and principles of governance have only served to enrich our understanding of India's strategic history.

#### NOTES

1. Torkel Brekke, "Between Prudence and Heroism: Ethics of War in the Hindu Tradition", in Torkel Brekke (ed.), *The Ethics of War in Asian Civilisations: A Comparative Perspective*, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 2006, p. 138.
2. Burton Stein, "The State and the Agrarian Order in Medieval South India: A Historiographical Critique", in Burton Stein (ed.), *Essays on South India*, The University Press of Hawaii, Hawaii, 1975, pp. 81-82; Mahendra Prasad Singh, "Indian State: Historical Context and Change", *The Indian Historical Review*, 21(1-2), 1995, pp. 37-56.
3. Vinay Lal, *The History of History: Politics and Scholarship in Modern India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 37.
4. Torkel Brekke, note 1, pp. 120-121.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
7. The Naqshbandi Sufi Jan-i Janan believed that Hinduism had its own lineage of

- prophets in Rama and Krishna, whose mission and message were similar to that of Prophet Mohammed. See: Yohannan Friedmann, "Islamic Thought in Relation to the Indian Context", in Richard Eaton (ed.), *India's Islamic Traditions: 711-1750*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 58.
8. Yohannan Friedmann, "Islamic Thought in Relation to the Indian Context", in Richard Eaton (ed.), *India's Islamic Traditions: 711-1750*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, p. 51; Muzaffar Alam, "Akhlāqi Norms and Mughal Governance", in Muzaffar Alam *et al.* (eds.), *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2000, p. 73.
  9. Al-Biruni (973-1050 CE) offered the initial scholarly perspective on Hinduism and its believers. He believed the association of Hinduism with idolatry to be misplaced, arguing instead that enlightened sections of both communities attained religious consciousness without resorting to idol worship. Those who did could belong to any religious faith and came to depend on constructed representations of the divine due to their lack of education. See: Yohannan Friedmann, note 8, pp. 52-54.
  10. Muzaffar Alam, note 8, pp. 73-78.
  11. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
  12. Peter Hardy, "Growth of Authority Over a Conquered Political Elite: Early Delhi Sultanate as a Possible Case Study", in J.F. Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998, p. 230.
  13. Burton Stein, note 2, p. 76.
  14. Muzaffar Alam, note 8, p. 77.
  15. Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 78.
  16. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 85. Al-Badaoni offers a counter-narrative to Fazl's portrayal of a liberal and tolerant Mughal regime. Badaoni's *Muntakhabu-T-Tawarikh*, compiled before his death in 1615 CE, should be read in the context of his general disapproval of Akbar's eclecticism that amounted to an undermining of Islamic practices in favour of more moderate policies. See: Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhabu-T-Tawarikh* (translated by George Ranking), Volume 1, *Academica Asiatica*, Patna, 1898, reprinted 1973.
  18. Muzaffar Alam, note 8, p. 85.
  19. Yohannan Friedmann, note 8, p. 55.
  20. Christopher Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 23-27.
  21. Yohannan Friedmann, note 8, p. 56.
  22. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Presidential Address: State Formation in Asia—Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 46(4), 1987, p. 736.
  23. Valerie Hudson (ed.), *Culture and Foreign Policy*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1997, pp. 28-29.
  24. Martin Shaw, "Post-Imperial and Quasi-Imperial: State and Empire in the Global Era", *Millennium*, 31(2), 2002, pp. 329-330.

# 8

## Kautilya on Far-sight, Foresight and Freedom

*Balbir Singh Sihag*<sup>1</sup>

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### **Introduction**

The ancient sages in India had a vision of a harmonious, healthy and peaceful society. They developed the *dharmic* values of non-violence, compassion, truthfulness, honesty, tolerance and cleanliness to realise their vision. They evolved a consistent model emphasising internal restraint (of ego, desire and attachment) through self-disciplining of senses, which resulted in a lifestyle that helped one in getting rid of the cycle of birth-death-rebirth and attaining *moksha*—a state of eternal bliss. For the less enlightened, they created the concepts of heaven and hell and evolved moral codes for living a productive and good life here on earth and enjoying residence in heaven after death. Their sole weapon for spreading such knowledge was persuasion. They were, however, aware of the possibility that some individuals might not be convinced and adhere to the codes. They prescribed performance of voluntary penance for digressions from the norms. Sure enough, some individuals did try to breach the ethical norms and resorted to evil means. People at that time believed that (i) *adharm*a (corruption, cruelty and other maladies) once started would spread like

cancer and (ii) even if it was removed, its reoccurrence was inevitable. They also believed that whenever *adharna* peaked to such proportions as to destroy the system itself and beyond the human prowess to come out of it, a savior (*avatar*, viz., a being/superhuman with Godly qualities) would appear to eradicate evil (*adharna*).<sup>1</sup>

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* made a paradigm shift on the issue. Being an empiricist he did not believe in fate and asserted that a person's destiny was quite in his own hands. He counted on human ingenuity to devise an organisational structure and a legal structure to complement the ethical norms to reduce scope for corruption and to impose punishment for digressions. His goal was to internalise preventive and positive measures for imbuing governance with *dharma* for doing which he adopted a multi-disciplinary approach. There has been no known thinker like Kautilya, who made seminal contributions to economics, law and national security in an integrated manner. He set out to build a prosperous and secure society on ethical foundation. His *Arthashastra* is a manual on how to promote *yogakshema*—peaceful enjoyment of prosperity—of all the people, that is, (i) to maintain peace by keeping the potential enemies of freedom at bay; (ii) to bring prosperity; and (iii) to ensure that everyone enjoyed prosperity. Note, *yogakshema* is a positive, holistic and richer concept than the concept of human security, which indicates merely an absence of negatives.

Kautilya's discussion on national security was comprehensive and methodical. It involved (i) identification of all the critical components of national security, (ii) assignment of responsibilities to each one, (iii) specification of desired qualifications/characteristics of each one and (iv) how to achieve their optimum levels through moral and appropriate material incentives. Section II presents his conceptual framework on the provision of national security.

Kautilya expected the king and his advisers to be far-sighted since he was concerned about the possibility of their myopic behavior. According to him, farsightedness was needed to evaluate the short-run and long-run implications/impact of a foreign treaty, project or a policy. This is presented in Section III. His predecessors had understood the importance of foresightedness in protecting oneself. Kautilya extended its role to preventing an aggression and thus defending freedom. This is discussed in

Section IV. Concluding observations are provided in the final section. Kautilya approached domestic and international affairs differently. His approach to domestic affairs was guided by *dharma* whereas his approach to international affairs was based on prudence. This discussion is presented in Section I.

## I. KAUTILYA ON SELECTION OF AN APPROPRIATE APPROACH

Kautilya's approach to peaceful enjoyment of prosperity was people-centric. He wrote, "In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects."<sup>2</sup> According to him, the king should serve his royal public like a loyal servant. It was king's moral duty to engineer prosperity and protect people against foreign aggression. He expected the king to protect people from all potential threats. He believed, "It is the duty of the king to protect the people from all calamities."<sup>3</sup>

*Menace of Slavery:* Kautilya argued that if a country lost independence, it virtually lost everything. He believed that poverty was a living death and argued that no country could ever prosper under a foreign ruler. He understood the menace of foreign rule. He argued, "A foreign king, on the other hand, is one who has seized the kingdom from a legitimate king still alive; because it does not belong to him, he impoverishes it by extravagance, carries off its wealth or sells it. If the country becomes too difficult for him to handle, he abandons it and goes away."<sup>4</sup> He also warned, "Harassment by the enemy's army not only affects the whole country but also ruins it by plunder, slaughter, burning and destruction."<sup>5</sup>

*Preferred Peace over War:* Usually weak countries pursue peace. However, Kautilya suggested pursuing peace with strength provided the terms of agreement were fair. He wrote, "When the benefit accruing to kings under a treaty, irrespective of their status as the weaker, equal or stronger king, is fair to each one, peace by the agreement shall be preferred course of action; if the benefits are to be unfairly distributed, war is preferable."<sup>6</sup> He also pointed out that the losses might be a lot less under a diplomatic

solution. He wrote, “That which entails small losses is a gain by diplomacy rather than by war.”<sup>7</sup> Clearly, he preferred peace to war.

*Sovereignty at any Cost:* Kautilya recommended to use every available means and at any cost to protect independence. He asserted, “An enemy’s destruction shall be brought about even at the cost of great losses in men, material and wealth.”<sup>8</sup> He was very explicit about this stance. He would recommend to the king not to hesitate in the use of extraordinary methods, even including those normally considered immoral, for eliminating criminals and in dealing with an aggressor, to ensure safety and security of his people. For example, he suggested, “A King, who finds himself in great financial difficulty, may collect [additional] revenue [using the methods described below].”<sup>9</sup> He recommended expropriating temple property, exploiting the gullibility of the people and by hook or crook confiscating the properties of traitors and wicked people.<sup>10</sup> Kautilya added, “Deceptive occult practices shall be used to frighten the enemy. It is also said that these can be used [against one’s own people] in case of a revolt in order to protect the kingdom.”<sup>11</sup> But this is to be done only in emergent situations and not recklessly.

Kautilya wrote, “Whenever danger threatens, the king shall protect all those afflicted like a father [protects his children].”<sup>12</sup> He added, “He shall, however, treat leniently, like a father [would treat his son], those whose exemptions have ceased to be effective.”<sup>13</sup> According to Kautilya, a king should take care of his subjects like a father takes care of his children. He would not recommend to a king to behave like a father towards a hyena that was bent upon harming his children. Thus, he recommended that decisions related to domestic economy (*arthaniti* and *dandaniti*) should be guided by *dharma* but those related to international affairs (national security, treaties, trade) must be utilitarian. This distinction should be kept in mind for a correct appreciation of his ideas and insights.

## II. KAUTILYA’S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO THE PROVISION OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Kautilya approached national security in a comprehensive and methodical manner. He believed that the most important task was to identify all the

potential adversaries and gather information on their strengths and weaknesses. According to him, national security could not be discussed in isolation or in the abstract. He emphasised the imperative of achieving parity with the potential adversaries and without any delay. He justified the urgency by arguing that power bred more power implying that any delay would widen the gap in relative power.

Then he proceeded to identify all the factors relevant to national security and gave concrete suggestions to achieve their optimum levels. He believed in launching a project/treaty/policy only after undertaking a sound cost-benefit analysis. He would ask three questions: (i) Who should decide the desirability and feasibility of a project/treaty? (ii) What should be their qualifications for making a sound decision? (iii) What type of incentives would be required to elicit optimum effort? Kautilya realised the limitations of human mind in solving complex problems. He suggested appointment of wise advisers to the king on the worthiness of a project, thus placing wisdom as the top qualification. He wrote, "When there is choice between a wise son and a brave son, it is better to give the brave son, who, though valorous, lacks wisdom. For, a wise son, though timid, uses his intelligence in his endeavors; like the hunter outwitting the elephant, the intelligent outwit the brave."<sup>14</sup> He assigned this decision-making responsibility to the king and his advisers.

*Qualification of an Adviser:* He described, "A councilor or minister of the highest rank should be a native of the state, born in a high family and controllable [by the king]. He should have been trained in all the arts and have logical ability to foresee things. He should be intelligent, persevering, dexterous, eloquent, energetic, bold, brave, and able to endure adversities and firm in loyalty. He should neither be haughty or fickle. He should be amicable and not excite hatred or enmity in others."<sup>15</sup> Why did Kautilya emphasise 'logical ability to foresee'? This is the most critical requirement for national security as explained in Section IV below.

According to him, qualification was necessary but not sufficient in eliciting optimal effort. He suggested moral and appropriate material incentives. For example, he recommended a high annual salary of 48,000 *panas* (rectangular shaped silver coin) to a councilor, 60 *panas* were considered sufficient to support a family for a year.

*Qualifications of Chief of Defence:* After the decision had been taken, then who should carry that out and what should be their qualifications, that is, skills, tools of analysis to implement the project? According to Kautilya, The Chief of Defence must have expertise in strategy and tactics and knowledge of weapons. He wrote, “The Chief of Defence shall be: (a) an expert in the use of all kinds of weapons used in warfare; (b) Conversant with the relative strengths of the four wings of the army and how to deploy them in battle.”<sup>16</sup> A handsome salary of 48,000 *panas* for the Chief of Defence was recommended.

*Soldiers must be well-trained and enthusiastic:* Kautilya emphasised the importance of both training and morale of the army. He stated, “Some teachers say that among Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra troops, a higher *varna* force shall be mobilised before a lower one because the higher the *varna* the more the spirit. Kautilya disagrees. An enemy may win over Brahmin troops by prostrating himself before them. It is better to have either an army composed of Kshatriyas trained in the use of weapons or a *vaishya* or *sudra* army with a large number of men.”<sup>17</sup>

*Fairness in Giving Rewards:* Kautilya believed that violation of horizontal equity and renegeing on a promised reward would result in a crowding-out effect, that is would reduce effort. According to him, “The types of people who are likely to be angry with the king are: someone to whom a promised reward has not been given” and “of two people equally skilled or efficient, the one who is humiliated.”<sup>18</sup>

*Moral Motivation:* Kautilya emphasised three things, common objective ‘service to the state’, an economic incentive (‘share the wealth’) and a moral incentive (‘the heaven that awaits’). According to him, the king should say to his troops, “I am as much a servant [of the State] as you are; we shall share the wealth of this state.”<sup>19</sup> He continued, “Bards and praise-singers shall describe the heaven that awaits the brave and the hell that shall be the lot of cowards. They shall extol the clan, group, family, deeds and conduct of the warriors.”<sup>20</sup>

*Role of Intelligence:* Kautilya realised the critical importance of information. It provided an edge in negotiations and in assessing strengths and weaknesses of potential adversaries. His advice to a king was: “No

enemy shall know his secrets. He shall, however, know all his enemy's weaknesses. Like a tortoise, he shall draw in any limb of his that is exposed."<sup>21</sup> He suggested setting-up an elaborate intelligence wing. He recommended, "A king shall have his own set of spies, all quick in their work, in the courts of the enemy, the ally, the Middle, and the Neutral kings to spy on the kings as well as their eighteen types of high officials."<sup>22</sup> He added, "He shall always station envoys and clandestine agents in all states of the circle. These shall cultivate those acting against the interests of the conqueror and, while maintaining their own secrecy, destroy repeatedly such inimical persons."<sup>23</sup>

*Winning Public Support:* According to Kautilya, a king could win public support by (i) bringing prosperity and (ii) administration of justice. He explained, "When a people are impoverished, they become greedy; when they are greedy, they become disaffected; when disaffected, they either go to the enemy or kill their ruler themselves."<sup>24</sup> He recommended, "Therefore, the king shall not act in such a manner as would cause impoverishment, greed or disaffection among the people; if, however, they do appear, he shall immediately take remedial measures."<sup>25</sup> He observed, "When a strong but unjust king is attacked, his subjects will not come to his help but will either topple him or go over to the attacker. On the other hand, when a weak but just king is attacked, his subjects will not only come to his help but also follow him until death."<sup>26</sup> Table 1 captures his comprehensive approach to national security.

*Production of Armaments:* Kautilya's goal was to have strength and an edge in every component of the national security. Unless weapons were (i) more advanced than that of a potential adversary (the edge), and (ii) were produced domestically (self-sufficiency), there was always a threat to national security. How to achieve it? At that time, elephants provided an edge in a battle. Kautilya gave high priority to preserving and developing elephant forests. He argued, "Some teachers say that land with productive forests is preferable to land with elephant forests, because a productive forest is the source of a variety of materials for many undertakings while the elephant forests supply only elephants. Kautilya disagrees. One can create productive forests on many types of land but not elephant forests. For one depends on elephants for the destruction of an enemy's forces."<sup>27</sup>

**Table 1: Kautilya’s Comprehensive Approach to National Security**

Division of Responsibilities	Factors Relevant to National Security	Desired Attributes	Appropriate Incentives	Feasibility
Why to do, that is undertaking cost-benefit analysis	King (Prime Minister/ President)	Ethical, Far-sighted, Foresighted	Moral Duty and Enlightened self-interest	Unlikely, No such requirement to become President or Prime Minister
	Advisers	Far-sighted, Foresighted	Moral and Material	Yes
How to do (implementation)	Chief of Defence	Knowledgeable about use of weapons, expertise in strategy and tactics	Moral and Material	Yes
	Military	Trained and Enthusiastic	Moral, Material and fairness in awards	Yes
	Scientists/ engineers	Understanding of both Theoretical and Applied Knowledge	Moral and Performance-based compensation	Yes
Information	Intelligence	Knowledgeable, uncompromising	Special training and material and moral incentives	Yes
	Armament	Self-sufficiency in producing armaments that provide an edge over a potential adversary	Providing appropriate incentives to scientists, engineers and manufacturers	Yes
Support	Public	Unwavering	Prosperity and Fairness	Yes

Elephants are not needed anymore but Kautilya's insight could now be generalised to conserving and developing a range of critical inputs needed to strengthen support and supply chains. These constitute essential elements of defence preparedness. Our scientists, engineers and manufacturers of weapons need the same kind of nurturing as the elephants were getting at that time.

*Selection of an Ally:* This is a topic in itself and needs much space for discussion. Kautilya mentioned both defensive and offensive needs for allies implying non-alignment was not a viable strategy. He wrote, "The best ally is one who has the following six qualities: an ally of the family for a long time, constant, amenable to control, powerful in his support sharing a common interest, able to mobilise [his forces] quickly and not a man who betrays [his friends]." <sup>28</sup> The issue is how to identify and cultivate such an ally in a dynamic international situation? It might be interesting to illustratively apply Kautilya's ideas to India selecting an ally in the present day international scenario summarised below in a simplified form.

**Table 2: Selection of an Ally**

Attribute	Japan		USA		Russia	
	Related to China	Related to Pakistan	Related to China	Related to Pakistan	Related to China	Related to Pakistan
Duration of friendship	Long		Short		Medium	
Dependable	Yes	Yes	May be	No	No	Yes
Manageable	Not Applicable		No		No	
Powerful in Support	Yes	Yes	May be	No	No	Yes
Common interest	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	No	No	No
Readiness	Not Applicable		Yes		Yes	

United States seems to be tired of wars and not in position to help anyone in a large war. It could have helped India in 1962 but chose not to help. It is more interested in commercial sale of defence equipment to countries like India but without losing the edge of keeping that of the latest technology for itself. Moreover, it demands and expects total submissiveness. Russia is likely to help if there were a conflict with Pakistan

but not with China as happened in 1962. Japan has the cutting-edge technology, has the resources and a common objective with India. It is likely to help if there were a conflict with China or with Pakistan. Historically also, there has been a strong bond between the two countries. Kautilya would choose Japan as a strategic partner. That does not imply that Kautilya would ignore other countries and international organisations.

### III. KAUTILYA ON FAR-SIGHTEDNESS IN NEGOTIATING TREATIES

Kautilya expected the king to promote *yogakshema*—peaceful enjoyment of prosperity—of all the people. He argued that undertaking of productive activities was essential to bringing prosperity. He suggested, “Hence the king shall be ever active in the management of the economy. The root of wealth is economic activity and lack of it brings material distress. In the absence of fruitful economic activity, both current prosperity and future growth are in danger of destruction. A king can achieve the desired objectives and abundance of riches by undertaking productive economic activity.”<sup>29</sup> Far-sightedness was essential to the determination of an activity whether it was productive or unproductive. Thus, foresightedness was essential to the engineering of prosperity. He believed that prosperity was essential to maintaining freedom from foreign rule since a poor country could not have the resources to protect itself. That is, far-sightedness was needed for both prosperity and protection.

Kautilya understood the critical role of far-sightedness in analysing the short-run and long run implications/impact of a policy/project/treaty. He wanted the decision-makers to be far-sighted since myopic ones would focus only on the short-run and lose out on the gains or incur losses in the long run. In addition to the time-dimension, he included other factors, such as whether the gain was temporary, permanent, safe, righteous, growing or great.<sup>30</sup>

*A Comprehensive List of Relevant Factors in Making a Choice:* He explained, “When the gains from two campaigns are equal, the king shall compare the following qualities and choose the one which has more good points: place and time; the power and the means required to acquire it; the

pleasure or displeasure caused by it; speed or slowness of getting it; the proximity or distance, the immediate and future consequences; its high value or constant worth; and its abundance or variety.”<sup>31</sup> It took more than two thousand years to reach this level of sophisticated analysis. He knew combinatorial rules and the following possibilities are discernible:

**Table 3: Table of Possible Combinations of Gains/Losses**

		Long-run			
		Safe Gain/ positive impact	Risky gain	No gain or loss	Loss
Short-run	Gain	Accept Case 1	Need discounting for the risk Case 4	Accept Case 7	Need weighing short-run gain against long run loss Case 10
	No gain no loss	Accept Case 2	Need discounting for the risk Case 5	Irrelevant Case 8	Reject Case 11
	Loss	Need weighing the short-run loss against long run gain Case 3	Needs discounting for the risk Case 6	Reject Case 9	Reject Case 12

Kautilya focused on some challenging possibilities, such as Cases 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. The decision on other possibilities was very easy since in cases like 1 and 4 there was no conflict. A few instances from *The Arthashastra* would clarify the position:

Case 3 in Table 3: (i) He discussed the immediate and future impacts of several policies. For example, he wrote, “helping a neighbour on the flank of the enemy with money or troops [without asking for payment; immediate loss of money or troops but long-term gain].”<sup>32</sup> That is, the immediate effect was negative but long-term impact was expected to be positive.

(ii) Kautilya asserted, “A king may agree to forego a large immediate gain and seek [only] a small future benefit if he intends to use again the partner who is being helped.”<sup>33</sup> Clearly, he expected a larger gain from reputation building.

Case 4, 5 or 6: He asked, “Which is preferable—an immediate small gain or a large gain in the future?” According to him, the answer depended on two factors: “A large gain in the future is preferable if it is like a seed [yielding fruit in the future] and if it is not likely to disappear [before fruition]. Otherwise, [if there is no growth and if there is a danger of it not fructifying] the small immediate gain is preferable.”<sup>34</sup>

Case 7: In this case, there was no need for doing any calculations: “A great gain is a substantial gain available immediately.”<sup>35</sup>

Kautilya stated, “A king shall employ, without hesitation, the methods of secret punishment against traitors in his own camp and against enemies; but he should do so with forbearance keeping in mind the future consequences as well as immediate results.”<sup>36</sup> He discussed many other challenging possibilities but his basic message was that decision-makers must possess far-sightedness for a correct evaluation of a treaty or project.

#### **IV. ROLE OF FORESIGHT IN THE PREVENTION OF CALAMITIES**

*Critical Role of Foresight:* Kautilya’s predecessors considered possession of foresight as a life saver. They wrote animal fables to teach the young to develop this component of wisdom. Recently, Harald Weise has used one of the animal fables to show how the lack of foresightedness of a traveler resulted in his loss of life and another fable to show how foresightedness of a cat and mouse saved their lives. He casts these fables in a game-theoretic setup.<sup>37</sup> It is a very novel way that makes them look like as if these were written a day before yesterday. Kautilya also warned a would-be adviser to the king as: “A wise man makes self-protection his first and constant concern.”<sup>38</sup> However, he extended its role in many directions. He argued that maintenance of both peace and prosperity, to a large extent, depended on preparedness and that in turn depended on foresightedness. According to him, decision-makers must be foresighted. If a ruler (Chief Executive Officers or CEO) did not foresee a threat, he would not be able to take any preventive or remedial measures. Kautilya emphasised the critical role of foresight in reducing the probability of occurrence of a catastrophe, accidents and other preventable situations.

Specifically, according to Kautilya, foresightedness was required in undertaking both preventive and remedial measures to handle a potential threat arising from an attack, occurrence of a famine or moral decay. Such calamities affect the whole country and, therefore, are labeled as sources of systemic risk. He wrote, “In the interests of the prosperity of the country, a king should be diligent in foreseeing the possibility of calamities, try to avert them before they arise, overcome those which happen, remove all obstructions to economic activity and prevent loss of revenue to the state.”<sup>39</sup> Table 4 captures his ideas on the role of foresight.

**Table 4: Role of Foresightedness in Preventing Calamities**

Seriousness of a Threat	Source of Threat	Preventive Measures	Remedial Measures
Very Serious (called Systemic Risk)	Aggression	Becoming more powerful than the potential aggressor	Loss minimisation through negotiations
	Famine	Expanding Irrigation facilities	Building buffer stocks of foodgrains
	Moral Decay	Ethical Anchoring through ethical education	Complementing penance with secular law

*Other Minor Situations:* Kautilya provided many situations in which foresightedness was very helpful. He stated: “If a king believes that the one to whom troops are lent will, after achieving the objective for which they were hired, appropriate them himself, send them to hostile lands or jungles, or, in some fashion make them useless, the forces shall not be lent, using the pretext that they are needed elsewhere. If, however, he is obliged to lend his troops, they shall be lent only for the limited period of that campaign, on condition that they shall stay and fight together and be protected from all dangers till the end of the campaign; as soon as the campaign is over, they shall be withdrawn on some pretext.”<sup>40</sup>

Further, “If the stronger ruler is not upright, the king shall quickly withdraw under some pretext, when the work has been done. If the stronger ruler is upright, the king shall wait until he is given permission to leave. The king shall make all efforts to move away from a dangerous situation, after ensuring the safety of the queen. Even if the king receives a small

share, or even no share, from a stronger king, he shall go away with a [seemingly?] content look. Later, when the strong king comes under the king's power [for any reason] twice the loss shall be exacted."<sup>41</sup>

## V. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Kautilya's approach to prosperity was ethical, foresighted (pro-active) and far-sighted. However, his approach to negotiations with a foreign ruler was utilitarian in nature, that is, instead of ethics, prudence was given primacy. His ideas on national security constituted a sub-set of the comprehensive system of governance into which it is fully integrated. Hence, efficient, caring and righteous governance with happiness and satisfaction of people as a necessary outcome; a robust economy with an inclusive growth; a system of preparedness to deal with natural calamities and external threats; a far-sighted external affairs policy with astute diplomacy, and people's support in the form of strong national pride and nationalist sentiments and commitment, etc. become essential elements of the national security system. Preparedness for meeting external threats on a stand-alone basis would not be very effective. The idea of good internal governance provides muscles to national security.

Kautilya considered both necessary and sufficient conditions for achieving optimum levels of efficiency. According to Basham, even a potter understood the benefits of assembly-type (called Fordism) division of labour. Kautilya and other ancient thinkers understood the cognitive division of labour. That is, pooling of information, knowledge and wisdom of various individuals to arrive at the best possible decision. Kautilya's approach was people-centric and comparing it to Machiavelli's king-centric approach shows ignorance about his work.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

\* "यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत  
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्यतदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्" भगवद्गीता (4/7)

'परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थायसंभवामियुगेयुगे' भगवद्गीता (4/8)

[Whenever righteousness is on the wane and there is ascendancy of unrighteousness,

then I give to Myself suitable forms of manifestation.] *Bhagwadgita* (4/7)  
 [For the protection of the pious and for rooting out the evil, and also for re-establishing  
 righteousness, I manifest Myself in every age.] *Bhagwadgita* (4/8)

The same thought has been stated in Awadhi language in *Ramacharitmanas* by  
 Goswami Tulsidas as thus:

“जब जब होइ धरम की हानी, बादेहि असुर अधम अभिमानी  
 तब तब धरि प्रभु मनुज सरीरा, हरहि कृपानिधि सज्जन पीरा”

Manifestation of God as an *Avatar* is to save human beings in situations where their  
 own efforts would woefully fall short of the requirement. Kautilya believed in human  
 effort and ingenuity to shape his own destiny. Hence he laid down an elaborate system  
 of national security, viz., freedom from fear and external aggression.

\*\* Balbir S. Sihag, in chapter 18 of his book *Kautilya: The True Founder of Economics*,  
 Vitasta Publications, New Delhi, 2014, presents Kautilya’s power equation as follows:

$$P = A (J, H) (K)^\lambda (E L_m)^{(1-\lambda)} \quad (1)$$

$$RP_1 = P_1 / P_2 \quad (2)$$

Where  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  = powers of king one and king two respectively,  $A$ = efficiency  
 parameter,  $H$  = experience and analytical skills of the advisers in utilising the  
 information made available through intelligence,  $K$  = horses, elephants, chariots and  
 armaments,  $E$  = enthusiasm and training,  $L_m$  = military strength,  $J$  = level of public  
 support for a just and kind-hearted king and  $RP_1$  = relative power of nation one.  
 Kautilya believed that  $H$  was the most important factor in enhancing national security.  
 He argued that power bred more power: a stronger king obtained more easily the  
 support of other kings and received a larger share from joint campaigns.

## NOTES

1. I am grateful to Bhoopendra Sinha for enhancing both clarity and content of the  
 paper. I am thankful to Saurabh Mishra, Sachin More and M.Subramaniam for helpful  
 suggestions.
2. L.N. Rangarajan (ed. Tr.), *The Arthashastra*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, New York,  
 1992, p. 149, [1.19.34].
3. *Ibid.*, p. 128, [4.3.1-2, 9.7.82].
4. *Ibid.*, p. 175, [8.2.5-8].
5. *Ibid.*, p. 132, [8.4.13-15].
6. *Ibid.*, p. 568, [7.8.34].
7. *Ibid.*, p. 635, [9.4].
8. *Ibid.*, p. 541, [7.13.33].
9. *Ibid.*, p. 269, [5.2.1].
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 540, [14.2.45].
12. *Ibid.*, p. 128, [4.3.42-43].
13. *Ibid.*, p. 180, [2.1.7-18].
14. *Ibid.*, p. 600, [7.17.18-26].

15. *Ibid.*, p. 120, [1.9.1].
16. *Ibid.*, p. 687, [2.22.9].
17. *Ibid.*, p. 685, [9.2.21-24].
18. *Ibid.*, p. 519, [1.14.2].
19. *Ibid.*, p. 713, [10.3.27].
20. *Ibid.*, p. 713.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 177, [1.15.60].
22. *Ibid.*, p. 506, [1.12.20].
23. *Ibid.*, p. 562, [7.13.43].
24. *Ibid.*, p. 159, [7.5.27].
25. *Ibid.*, [7.5.28].
26. *Ibid.*, p. 573, [7.5.16-18].
27. *Ibid.*, p. 620, [7.11.3-17].
28. *Ibid.*, p. 606, [7.9.38].
29. *Ibid.*, p. 149, [1.19.35-36].
30. *Ibid.*, p. 635.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 636, [9.4.24].
32. *Ibid.*, p. 642, [9.7.14-22].
33. *Ibid.*, p. 594, [7.8.6].
34. *Ibid.*, p. 617, [7.9.50-52].
35. *Ibid.*, p. 635, [9.4].
36. *Ibid.*, p. 158, [5.1.57].
37. Harald Wiese, "Backward Induction in Indian Animal Tales", *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 16, 2012, pp. 93-103.
38. L.N. Rangarajan, note 2, p. 205, [5.4.16-17].
39. *Ibid.*, p. 116, [8.4.50, 8.5.21].
40. *Ibid.*, p. 596, [7.8.28-33].
41. *Ibid.*, p. 624, [7.5.45,46,48].



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# APPENDIX

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# Appendix<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Composition of Armoured Regiments**

Serial	Unit(s)	Class Composition
1	President's Bodyguard	Jats, Sikhs, Rajputs
2	1 HORSE	Rajputs, Jats, Sikhs
3	2 LANCERS	Rajputs, Jats
4	3 CAVALRY	Rajputs, Jats, Sikhs
5	4 HORSE	Sikhs, Dogras
6	7 CAVALRY	Jats, Sikhs
7	8 CAVALRY	South Indian Communities (SIC)
8	14 HORSE	Sikhs, Dogras
9	16 CAVALRY	South Indian Communities (SIC)
10	17 HORSE	Rajput, Jats
11	18 CAVALRY	Jats, Rajputs, Muslims
12	20 LANCERS	Jats, Rajputs
13	CENTRAL INDIA HORSE	Jats, Dogras, All Classes
14	45 CAVALRY	2/3 SIC, 1/3 Others Indian Communities (OIC)
15	61 CAVALRY	Rajputs, Marathas, Kaimkhani
16	5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15,19, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 Armoured Regiment	All India
17	62 CAVALRY	Dogra, Jats, Sikhs
18	63 and 64 CAVALRY	Jats, Rajput, Sikhs
19	65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 Armoured Regiment	All India

<sup>1</sup>Source: P.K. Gautam, *Composition and Regimental System of the Indian Army: Continuity and Change*, IDSA/Shipra, New Delhi, 2008. Tables 1 and 2 have been compiled from secondary literature.

Serial	Unit(s)	Class Composition
20	70 and 72 Armoured Regiment	All India
21	71 Armoured Regiment	Jats, Dogras, SIC
22	73 Armoured Regiment	Sikhs, Rajputs, Kaimkhanis
23	74, 75, 76, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, and 90 Armoured Regiment	All India

**Table 2: Composition of Infantry Regiments**

Serial	Regiment	Class Composition	Remarks
1	Brigade of the Guards	Zonal	Zonal example: (a) Two battalions are composed of hill tribes (b) One battalion is composed of South Indian Communities (SIC).
2	Parachute Regiment and Special Forces		Fixed class, zonal and All India
3	Mechanised Infantry Regiment	One class, fixed class and all India	Units originally converted from one class units were raised as all India mixed. Now all the 14 units are reverting back to the original class composition.
4	Punjab Regiment	Sikhs, Dogras	13, 14, 15 and 16 battalions are former State Forces.
5	Madras Regiment	South Indian Classes	Including former State Forces of Travancore, Cochin and Mysore. See Annexure I.
6	GRENADIERS	Rajputs, Kaimkhanis, Hindustani Mussalmans, Dogras, Gujjar, Ahir, Mena, Gujratis, Jats	Khaimkhani companies are in 5, 6, 8 13, 16, 17, 21. Hindustani Mussalman companies are in 4, 20 and 22 battalions. 13 Grenadiers is a former State Force.
7	Maratha Light Infantry	Marathas, All India	Some battalions have troops from all India. One has south Indian communities.
8	Rajputana Rifles	Jats, Rajputs (including Gujaratis)	3, 6 and 8 battalions have one company each of Khemkhanis while the 9th battalion has one company of Gujaratis from Saurashtra.
9	Rajput Regiment	Rajputs, Gujars, Brahmmins, Bengalis	2nd Battalion has Bengali company.
10	Jat Regiment	Jats	

Serial	Regiment	Class Composition	Remarks
11	Sikh Regiment	Sikhs	
12	Sikh Light Infantry	Mazhabi Sikhs	
13	Dogra Regiment and Dogra Scouts	Dogras	
14	Garhwal Rifles and Garhwal Scouts	Garhwalis	Earlier only Rajputs were enrolled, but now any domicile of Garhwal is eligible for enrolment.
15	Kumaon Regiment#, Naga* Regiment and Kumaon Scouts	Kumaonis, Ahirs, Rajputs, North East Region (NER)	#Kumaon Regiment, 75% Kumaonis and 25% Ahirs. *Naga Regt 50% Nagas and 50% Kumaonis.
16	Assam Regiment	Nagas, Kukis, Mizos, Lushias, Assamese, Kachari, other northeast region (NER)	See Annexure II.
17	Bihar Regiment	Any person from North Bihar, Adivasis from Chottanagpur Plateau (Jharkhand and Orissa) and 5% Other Indian Communities (OIC)	
18	The Mahar Regiment	Mahars, All India	Five battalions are of pure Mahars, one battalion has troops from border regions and the balance units are on all India mixed class basis.
19	Jammu and Kashmir Rifles (J&K Rifles)—erstwhile State Forces	Dogras, Gorkhas, Sikhs, Muslims	13th battalion of J&K Rifles is composed of only Dogras hailing from Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and J&K.
20	Ladakh Regiment (erstwhile Scouts)	Buddhists, Muslims	
21	Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry	Muslims*, Hindus, Sikhs (from J & K) except one unit having Dogras, Sikhs, Buddhists, Gorkhas, others. Units are organised with 50% Muslims and 50% ethnic groups of J & K	*Includes Home and Hearth Territorial Army units such as the Ikhwan battalion of surrendered militants who are Muslims.
22	1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 11 Gorkha Rifles	Gorkhas from Nepal and India	In approximate ratio of 70:30. Likely ration planned 60:40. Total strength about 45,000. There are approximately 1, 20,000 pensioners in Nepal.

# Annexure I

## **The Madras Regiment Today**

Today, in India, in the evolution of the military system, troops from the south who join as volunteer soldiers are categorised as South Indian Communities (SIC).<sup>1</sup> The Madras Regiment comprises of a number of infantry battalions or units. All troops of the SIC are mixed into sections, platoons and companies. Similarly, The Corps of Engineers has the Madras Engineering Group (MEG) having Engineer Regiments. Regiments of the armoured corps like 8 Cavalry and 16 Cavalry have all class SIC troop composition and 45 Cavalry has 2/3rd SIC. The Regiment of Artillery likewise has many one class units composed of SIC troops. Few examples of units are 4 Field Regiment, 11 Field Regiment, 40 Medium Regiment, 70 Medium Regiment and 191 Field Regiment. 37 Medium Regiment is Coorg Regiment. Besides the all India all class units of arms, combat support arms and services of the army, the navy and air force also have a fair share of these fine troops from south India.<sup>2</sup>

The regiment proudly traces its roots to ancient times. *The History of the Madras Regiment* records: “The Madras soldier, popularly known as “Thambi” hails mainly from the four southern states (Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu), Pondicherry, Coorg and southern Islands of the Bay of Bengal. He has time and again heroically vindicated that in his veins courses the blood of martial ancestors, who, for centuries memorably reigned over or valiantly served the Pallava, Chola, Pandya and Chera kingdom.”<sup>3</sup> One interesting and positive tradition is that the regimental language of units of the Madras Regiment is Tamil, though a

unit may not have majority of troops from Tamil Nadu and may, for example, be having more number of troops from Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh. The war cry is “*Veer Madrasi, AdiKollu, AdiKollu*” (O ye valiant Madrasi, Hit and Kill, Hit and Kill).

#### NOTES

1. Officer cadre is recruited on an all India basis by way of competitive examination and selection. Officers are posted on commissioning to any regiment or services they chose and based on their choice their vacancies are adjusted. The regiment is then for life. In the military career, only a Lieutenant commissioned in the Madras Regiment is entitled and eligible to command a battalion as the Commanding Officer. Most officers are not from south India but are more south Indian than those who may be by birth but do not serve in the Madras Regiment or with SIC troop units in the engineers, armoured corps or artillery.
2. Recruitment is carried out according to recruitable male population (RMP) of each state which is 10 per cent of the male population. See: P.K. Gautam, *Composition and Regimental System of the Indian Army: Continuity and Change*, IDSA/Shipra, New Delhi, 2008, p. 35, 41 and 51.
3. J.R. Daniels, *The Black Pom-Poms: History of the Madras Regiment 1941-1983*, Wellington, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu (South India), Commandant The Madras Regimental Centre, 1986, p. iv.

## Annexure II

### **Mixed Class Composition: A Unique Case of North East India<sup>1</sup>**

The Assam Regiment provides insights into this complex subject as is obtained in the northeast India. The Late Lt. Gen. Sushil K. Pillai, himself a Malayali from Kerala but a real son of soil of the northeast at heart, explains that there are 97 main ethnic groups out of a total of 521 in the northeast. The percentage of each group such as Assamese, Nagas, Manipuris, Khasis, Mikirs, Lushia, and so on has undergone changes from time to time, depending on the overall situation. Companies are based on a mixed composition.

In 1985, a decision was taken that two new raisings of the Assam Regiment (12 and 14 Battalions) will have mixed class composition consisting of South Indian Communities (SIC), Dogras, Garhwalis, and Gorkhas in addition to the traditional northeast region (NER) groups. This decision was pushed through as at that point of time under the experience of Operation Blue Star when some Sikh troops had mutinied after the assault by the Indian Army on the Golden Temple in June 1984 which had been taken over by armed militants. It was felt that reorganisation by way of mixing units by breaking the one class units would reduce such episodes. New raisings of 11 Regiments (Madras, Rajputana Rifles, Rajput, Jat, Sikh, Dogra, Garhwal Rifles, Assam, Bihar, J&K Rifles and Gorkhas) were to be constituted on a mixed basis. In the case of the 12th Battalion Assam Regiment and 14th Battalion Assam Regiment there was a rifle company each of troops hailing from the NER, South Indian Classes (SIC), Garhwalis,

---

and Dogras. They showed good results. Later orders were reversed and in 1992 a study on “Rationalisation of Class Composition” by Army Headquarters concluded that this was not an opportune time to make changes to the old system and status quo to be maintained. The two battalions reverted back to traditional fixed class composition in 1999.

#### NOTES

1. Source for this annexure is S.K. Pillai, *Assam Vikram: Unique Valour—History of the Assam Regiment 1947- 2000*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 349-350.

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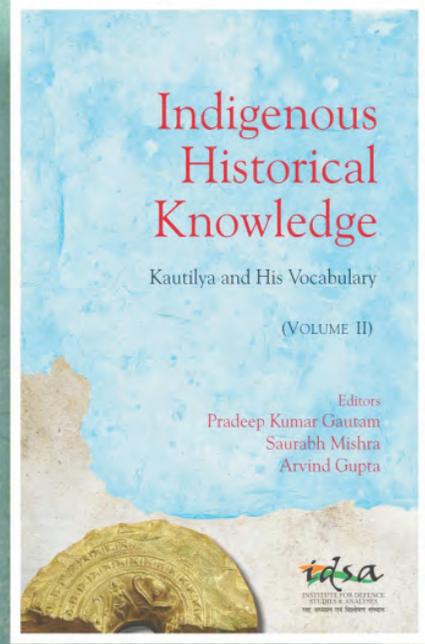
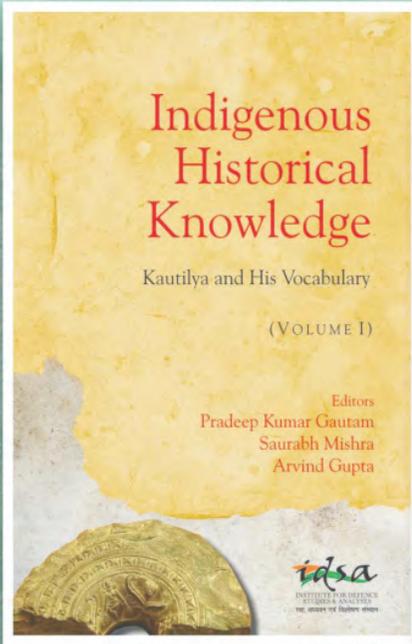
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