
"YOGAH KARMASU KAUSHALAM"
– CHANAKYA
KAUTILYAN
FOREIGN POLICY
FOR
VIKSIT BHARAT 2047
Ancient Wisdom for a Stronger, Safer and Viksit Bharat 2047
अर्थशास्त्र
ARTHASHASTRA
STRATEGY
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USING THE SAPTANGA OF THE STATE TO WIN PEACE AND PROSPERITY
An Article for the Official Magazine of the National Defence College, India
by
Brigadier Sanjay P Vishwasrao
2020
"From Strategic Thought to a Viksit Bharat 2047"

Kautilyan Foreign Policy for Viksit Bharat 2047

Originally written in 2020. Adopted in 2026 for a broader audience.

Applying 2,300-Year-Old Statecraft to a Live Crisis — A Framework for Strategic, Risk and Geopolitical Analysis

Sanjay P Vishwasrao, Major General, Retired

Written in 2020 as Brigadier, while attending the 60th Course at the National Defence College, for its journal Rakshika — in the same month as the Galwan Valley clash the essay analyses.

> *"There is some self-interest behind every friendship. Foreign policy is the deployment of saam, daam, dand, bhed towards neighbouring states. Neighbouring states are the source of treaties and hostilities."*
>
> **— Kautilya, 4 BC**

WHY THIS ANALYSIS CARRIES WEIGHT

This essay was written in 2020, at the National Defence College, in the same month as the Galwan Valley clash it analyses — live strategic analysis, not retrospective commentary. It applies Kautilya's 2,300-year-old Arthashastra, alongside the Mahabharata's own strategic thought, to read India's foreign-policy choices, China's encirclement strategy, and the road ahead, using the same comparative, framework-driven method the author brings to strategic, risk and geopolitical analysis today.

The 2020 Paradigm

National security is, first and foremost, about territorial integrity, sovereignty, and decisional autonomy on strategic issues. Globalisation, the misuse of unregulated global commons for societal warfare by autocratic regimes against democracies, and rising authoritarian nationalism (distinct from patriotism, as Western strategists draw the line) have together

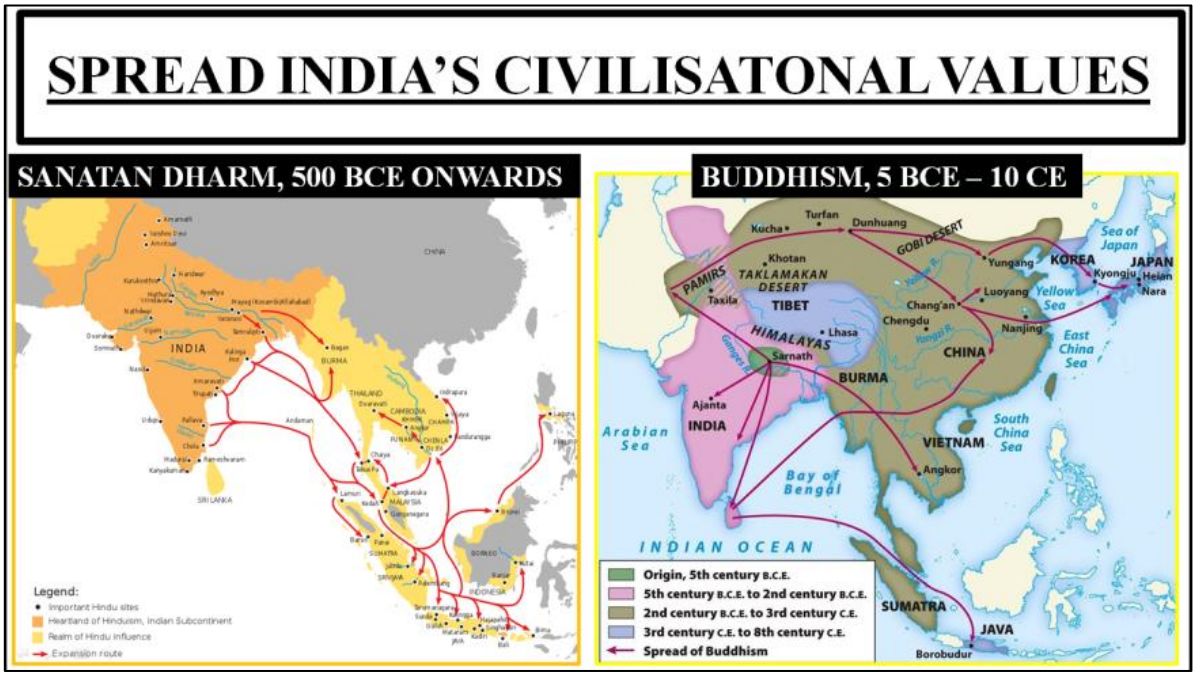
introduced new challenges to national security. India, with its uniquely open democracy, largely unregulated internet and social media, numerous internal fault lines and political dissonance, has long been an easy target for this kind of societal attack by its adversaries. All of this came to a head in 2020, with trade wars, COVID-19 and Chinese aggression along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

India — Non-Aligned and Non-Involved

Non-alignment reduced India's foreign policy to a comical simplicity, putting key elements of national security at risk in the process. It became a set of sermons delivered with monotonous regularity regardless of the issue at hand — trade or Palestine alike. After early interest, the world simply switched off; India kept up the barrage regardless, demanding recognition on behalf of a nation rich in ideas but, by comparison, poor in implementation, and increasingly fell on deaf ears. Aparna Pande (author of 'From Kautilya to Modi: The Evolution of India's Foreign Policy,' 2017, and 'Making India Great: The Promise of a Reluctant Global Power,' 2020) identifies four recurring threads in India's foreign policy: messianic idealism (peace and justice), imperialist legacy (India knows best), realism (Kautilya's saam, daam, dand, bhed) and isolationism (reluctance to get involved). Given the challenges India now faces, it can no longer afford to stay non-aligned or non-involved — as India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has himself made clear.[1]

[1]Interview of EAM to Times Now TV on 26 September 2020. <https://www.timesnownews.com/videos/times-now/india/eam-jaishankar-on-nationalism-greater-self-interest-converse-india/75916>

The Geo-Strategic Backdrop to India's Choice of Foreign Policy



Map 1: Spread of Indian civilisational values, Kautilya onwards.

Idealism Bought India Neither Security nor Image. Post-independence, India's non-alignment mixed idealism, civilisational hangover and isolationism. Even as China stayed out of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) altogether and Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO as a member, India set aside Kautilya's own Shadgunya and Mandala theories of foreign policy — the very framework behind the Mauryan Empire's success: six categories of bilateral relations (peace, neutrality, alliance, preparing for war, double-dealing and war) applied across four categories of states (enemy, ally, the middle king — neutral and powerful — and the distant king — neutral and most powerful). NAM's own inclusion of dictators and communist leaders (Castro, Tito, Nasser, Sukarno and Nkrumah) sat uneasily with India's own civilisational values. Contrast this with President Roosevelt's framing of America's role in the Second World War as the 'arsenal of democracy': India ended up failing not only to secure its own national interests, but also to propagate its values effectively.

India's Geo-Strategic Situation, 1947–2017. Kautilya held that a leader should not chase personal glory, but work to secure the country's national interests. Reading India's geo-strategic position from 1947 onward through that lens — glory versus national interest — is instructive.

China. China and the USSR enjoyed friendly relations during the Second World War, with Premier Stalin initially backing the Kuomintang before that support shifted to the Chinese Communist Party in 1953. USSR–China relations then soured between 1953 and 1969 over differences between Premier Khrushchev and Chairman Mao,[2] which helped thaw China–US relations by 1972. Ties with the USSR improved again under Premier Brezhnev and Chairman Deng, until China began backing the Afghan mujahideen against Soviet occupation from 1979 to 1989 — before improving once more after the USSR's 1991 collapse, culminating in the 1991 Russia–China Border Agreement and the 2001 Russia–China Friendship Treaty.

Pakistan. Created by the British Crown, in part, to tie India down, Pakistan has drawn Western support against India for virtually its entire existence.[3] China recognised the same utility in Pakistan as early as 1950. Pakistan used the 1962 India–China war to deepen that relationship further, illegally ceding the Shaksgam Valley to China under a 1963 border agreement, and did the same again after the 1971 India–Pakistan war, becoming a formal strategic ally of China by 1972. Pakistan was, throughout, also a member of SEATO and CENTO from 1954 to 1979; its alliance with the US strengthened further during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–89), pausing only briefly after its 1998 nuclear tests, before Western support resumed from 2001 to 2017 in the wake of 9/11. Even while styled the 'most allied ally' of the US

[2]The peak of the China-USSR border conflict was the Ussuri River clash on March 1969. It was similar to the Galwan Valley clash 51 years later.
[3]Aman Hingorani, *Unravelling the Kashmir Knot* (New Delhi: Sage Publication India, 2016).

in the war on terror, Pakistan signed a Friendship Treaty with China in 2005 and the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor agreement in 2015.

A Critique of India's Foreign Policy Choices, 1947–2017

While the Western world, China and Pakistan alike appeared to be following Kautilya's own Mandala theory to tie India down, India chose non-alignment instead.[4] As Nehruvian India spoke of Panchsheel (peaceful coexistence), China was already preparing to win a contest of comprehensive national power, drawing on Sun Tzu's Thirty-Six Stratagems — 'kill with a borrowed knife,' 'watch the fire burning from across the river,' 'conceal a dagger in a smile,' 'befriend a distant state while attacking a nearby one,' and 'borrow a safe passage to conquer a kingdom.' Bruce Riedel, in 'JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA and the Sino-Indian War' (2015), writes of the 1962 war: 'Mao's focus was on Nehru, but a defeat of India would also be a setback for two of Mao's enemies: Khrushchev and Kennedy.' The parallels between 1962 and 2020 are hard to miss. India made two notable exceptions to non-alignment in this period — accepting American help after the 1962 debacle, and the August 1971 India–Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation ahead of the December 1971 India–Pakistan war — while its silence on China's 1950 invasion of Tibet, and on the Soviet invasions of Hungary (1956) and Afghanistan (1979), was never really 'peaceful coexistence' either way. India — itself recovering from an estimated USD 45 trillion drained by British rule over two centuries — arguably failed to follow Kautilya's own advice because of a lingering colonisation of the mind (Shashi Tharoor, 'An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India,' 2017).[5] Nor, as a NAM founder-member, did India manage to project its own civilisational values effectively. China built comprehensive national power; India, by contrast,

[4]Javid Hussain, 'Kautilya's Arthashastra and Pakistan', The Nation (Pakistan), 17 March 2015. <https://nation.com.pk/17-Mar-2015/kautilya-s-arthashastra-and-pakistan>
[5]Shashi Tharoor, 'Shashi Tharoor on what the British did to India | Antidote Festival at Sydney Opera House', 30 October 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SEPPnd3380>

largely trumpeted its civilisational soft power — worth noting, since China's own formula for comprehensive national power (power equals population and territory, plus economic power, plus military power, all multiplied by national strategy and national will) places remarkably little weight on soft power at all. The claim that NAM helped build India's identity and kept the peace in a post-colonial world is, on this evidence, worth re-examining.

India's Choices: Non-Alignment, Hedging or Partnership

India's Foreign Policy Reset, 2014–2019. Since 2014, India's foreign policy has undergone a genuine reset: greater focus on the immediate neighbourhood and West Asia, a shift from 'Look East' to 'Act East,' upgraded strategic partnerships with the US and France, and a 'No Terror & Talks' approach to Pakistan. All four Upayas of foreign policy have been visibly deployed to achieve these objectives: sama (conciliation, with Bangladesh)[6], dana (gifts, to the Maldives)[7], bheda (rupture, with Pakistan and the Taliban in Afghanistan) and danda (force, against Pakistan).[8] At the same time, India kept both China and Russia engaged bilaterally and multilaterally while working toward a USD 5 trillion economy, balancing its new strategic partnership with the US against deepening economic engagement with China — engagement that mostly benefited China, feeding a new colonial-scale challenge from CCP-led China while eroding India's own strategic autonomy.

The Galwan Valley Clash as an Inflection Point. India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale told the Raisina Dialogue in January 2019: 'India has moved from its non-aligned past. India today is an aligned state — but based on

[6]Associated Press, 'India, Bangladesh swap border enclaves, settle old dispute', The Hindu, 1 August 2015. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-bangladesh-swap-border-enclaves-settle-old-dispute/article7488497.ece>
[7]DR Chaudhary, 'India gifts patrol vessel to Maldives as net security provider of region', The Economic Times, 5 December 2015. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-gifts-patrol-vessel-to-maldives-as-net-security-provider-of-region/articleshow/72376730.cms>
[8]PK Gautam, 'Understanding Kautilya's Four Upayas', IDSA, 20 June 2013. <https://idsa.in/idsacomments/UnderstandingKautilyasFourUpayas_pkgautam_200613>

issues. It will continue to pursue strategic autonomy.'[9] External Affairs Minister Jaishankar echoed this in July 2020, calling hedging 'a foreign policy imperative in a multi-polar world' and independence of decision 'a factor of continuity for India,' adding that India would never join a formal alliance system; his August 2020 remark went further still — 'strategic autonomy that was once fashionable in a unipolar world has assumed relevance once again in terms of global supply chains.'[10] The Galwan Valley clash of 15–16 June 2020 has, on this evidence, become the inflection point that extends the goal of strategic autonomy — the ability to pursue national interests and set policy without external constraint — into every sphere of national security and foreign relations.[11]

Strategic Autonomy Versus Formal Partnership. The comparative value of non-alignment against formal strategic partnership is worth testing against a few examples of international cooperation:

- **The US–Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security (1951, 1960).** Japan has not lost its own identity, and today ranks third globally by nominal GDP (USD 5.15 trillion) — ahead of India's fifth-place USD 2.94 trillion.
- **The US–South Korea Mutual Defence Treaty (1953).** South Korea, likewise, has not lost its identity, and has gone on to shape the world positively through its technological strength.
- **Pakistan's duplicitous use of both the US (and the wider West) and China**, while consistently pursuing its own revisionist agenda toward

[9]DR Chaudhary, 'Will pursue strategic autonomy policy, says foreign secretary', The Economic Times, 11 January 2019. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/will-pursue-strategic-autonomy-policy-says-foreign-secretary/articleshow/67480579.cms?from=mdr>
[10]C Raja Mohan, 'Today, India's strategic autonomy is about coping with Beijing's challenge to its territorial integrity, sovereignty', The Indian Express, 25 August 2020. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/reinventing-india-strategic-autonomy-china-us-6568347/>
[11]Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia (retd), 'India-China Face-Off in Ladakh: Galwan is an inflection point long overdue', Defence Capital, 20 June 2020. <https://defence.capital/2020/06/20/india-china-face-off-in-ladakh-galwan-is-an-inflection-point-long-overdue/>

India and Afghanistan. Pakistan has not lost its identity either — and, whatever the long-term cost, has shown remarkable consistency in using terrorism as a foreign-policy tool under a nuclear umbrella.

- **The USSR's failure to warn India of China's intent in 1962** (its own ambassador in Beijing was briefed on China's plan on 8 October 1962, twenty days before operations began).[12] Russia may have repeated the pattern in 2020, both to discourage India from embracing the US and to preserve its own position as an exporter of weapons and technology to India.
- **America's role in ending Pakistan's aggression in the 1999 Kargil War early**, including sharing strategic intelligence with India during the conflict — set against its 1971 attempt to intervene in support of Pakistan despite blatant human-rights violations by the Pakistani Army in what was then East Pakistan.[13] India lost neither its identity nor its international standing either way, but the episodes together make the case for dynamic strategic partnerships paired with consistent national interests.
- **The emerging US and Quad role in the current India–China standoff**, compared with Russia's. As China works to raise its own comprehensive national power — its 'zonghe guoli' — for the final push toward the 'China Dream' of 2049, India's own comprehensive national power is not yet built to win that particular contest, which is exactly why Kautilya's Saptanga model of national strength in the Arthashastra is worth revisiting.[14]

[12]Press Trust of India, 'Nehru sought U.S. help during 1962 Indo-China war: book', The Hindu, 14 October 2014. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/nehru-sought-us-help-during-1962-indochina-war-book/article7761071.ece>
[13]Gary J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide* (New Delhi: Random House India, 2013).
[14]Lt Col Malay Mishra, 'Unique Approach to Comprehensive National Power through the Lens of Kautilya's Arthashastra', USI Journal, January–March 2017. <https://usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal/unique-approach-to-comprehensive-national-power-through-the-lens-of-kautilyas-arthashastra/>

Foreign Policy Lessons from Kautilya's Arthashastra

Kautilya lays out six guiding principles of foreign policy, and four ideas (termed 'theories' in this essay) for putting foreign policy into practice.

Guiding Principles.[15]

- A king shall develop his state.
- The enemy shall be eliminated.
- Those who help are friends.
- A prudent course should always be adopted.
- Peace is to be preferred over war.
- A king's conduct, in victory and in defeat, must be just.

The Theory of Shakti (National Power).[16] Kautilya lists seven Prakritis that together build a state's Shakti, or power. He holds that these seven Prakritis generate three kinds of Shakti: Mantra-shakti (the power of knowledge, influence and diplomacy — soft power), Prabhav-shakti (the power of treasury and security forces — hard power), and Utsaha-shakti (the power of leadership and the armed forces that gives the other six Prakritis their drive, energy and direction). These three Shaktis interact to produce a state's overall National Shakti — what would today be called comprehensive national power.

[15]LN Rangarajan, *Kautilya: The Arthashastra* (New Delhi: Penguin Random House, 1992), p. 510.
[16]RP Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra (Part 2)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1972), pp. 314–316.

Prakrities (National Capabilities)	National Powers
Swamin (leadership & unity/solidarity)	Power of Energy
Amatya (councillors & intelligence)	Power of Knowledge
Janapada (territory, people & resources)	Power of Energy
Durga (defensibility of nation)	Power of Might
Kosa (treasury)	
Bala (security forces)	
Mitra (ally) *(three types- own nation, ally and ally's ally)*	Force multiplier impact on *prakriti* … 3 (ally types)x 6 *prakrities* = 18

Table 1: National capabilities and the resulting national power.

CORPORATE PARALLEL — SAPTANGA AS A COMPETITIVE-STRENGTH AUDIT

Kautilya's seven Prakritis map directly onto a rigorous corporate-strength audit: leadership and organisational unity (Swamin), the quality of one's advisory bench and market intelligence (Amatya), the territory or market position actually held (Janapada), the defensibility of that position against a rival (Durga), balance-sheet strength (Kosa), operational and security capability (Bala), and the force-multiplying value of genuine alliances (Mitra). Very few strategy reviews score all seven together — most focus on treasury and market share alone, and miss exactly the leadership, intelligence and alliance factors Kautilya treats as equally decisive.

The Shadgunya Theory of Six Measures of Foreign Policy.[17] Kautilya lists six measures of foreign policy, and the situations calling for each — peace, war, staying quiet (neutrality), preparing for war, seeking protection (alliance), and playing a double game, applied according to one's relative strength against a given state.

[17]Op. cit., pp. 321–345.

The Upaya Theory of Expedients. The four upayas, or approaches to achieving a foreign-policy objective, are sama, dana, bheda and danda: conciliation, gifts, rupture and force. These appear across many Hindu texts, and closely echo Hans J. Morgenthau's own chapter on methods of balance of power in 'Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace' (1966) — divide and rule, compensation, armaments, and alliances map almost exactly onto bheda, dana, danda and sama respectively.[18]

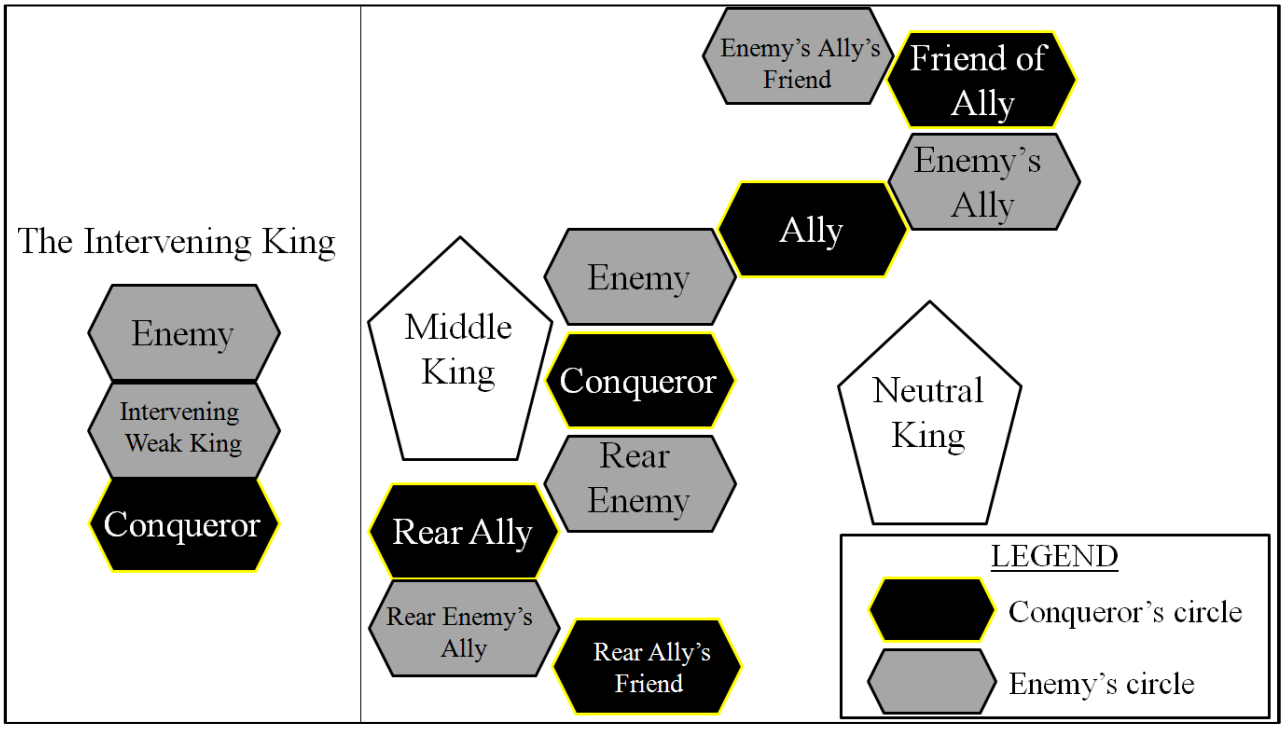


Figure 1: The Mandala theory, or circle of states, of Kautilya.

The Mandala Theory of the Circle of States. Kautilya holds that every king, or state, sits within a circle of other states — the conqueror or challenger, an enemy, a middle king, and a neutral king — illustrated above following L.N. Rangarajan's rendering of the Arthashastra (1992). This circle is not defined by geography but by the pattern of relations between states: by dynamically applying the right Shadgunya measure and Upaya expedient, a conqueror or challenger can create and exploit opportunities for itself while exposing rivals to real danger.

[18]PK Gautam, ibid.

RELEVANCE FOR GOVERNMENT AND THINK-TANK STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

The Mandala model is, in essence, a rigorous stakeholder-mapping exercise: not just who is friend or foe today, but who becomes an ally the moment a shared neighbour turns hostile. Any government or think-tank team assessing a contested region, an industry coalition, or a regulatory battle can build the same circle — conqueror, enemy, middle power, neutral power — and ask which lever (conciliation, gift, rupture or force) actually moves each one, rather than treating the whole field as a single undifferentiated 'other side.'

Analysing India's Non-Alignment and China's India Strategy



Map 2: China's encirclement of India through the String of Pearls, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Maritime Silk Route.

India's Non-Alignment, 1947–2014. A policy built on the pursuit of individual glory, against Kautilya's own advice to focus on national-security interests, combined with socialism to produce India's so-called 'Hindu rate'

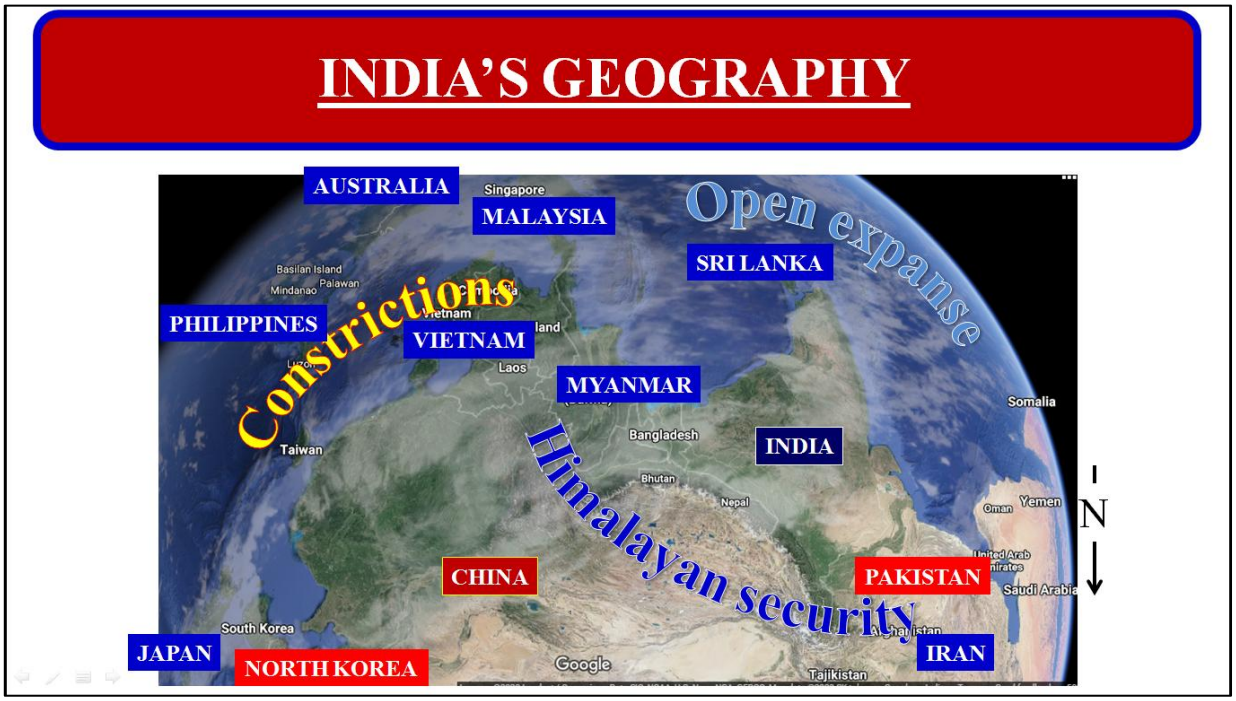
of economic growth from 1947 to 1991 — a pattern repeated, briefly, with the 1997 'Gujral Doctrine,' interrupted only by the 1998 nuclear tests. Non-alignment brought India neither prosperity for its people nor a proportionate place among nations; the West's and China's shared use of Pakistan as a proxy to tie India down succeeded, in large part, because non-alignment had already left India strategically isolated. The quiet erosion of Indian democracy since independence, and of the Indian economy since 1991, has let a West–China–Pakistan nexus wage a genuine societal war on India through the 21st century — its intelligence and ground indicators first surfacing after the February 2019 Pulwama IED attack, further exposed during the anti-CAA protests and the Delhi riots that coincided with President Trump's February 2020 visit, and laid fully bare only after the Indian Army's twenty soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice in the Galwan Valley on 15–16 June 2020.

China's India Strategy. A key historical indicator of China's real intent toward India has been its own unwillingness to resolve the border question. Its 'String of Pearls' — a network of Chinese military and commercial facilities across India's immediate neighbourhood — emerged as the second, more visible marker of that intent. China's Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Route, including the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, are together aimed at overcoming its own 'Malacca dilemma' (a chokepoint on its oil supply) and 'Himalayan dilemma' (the severe terrain and weather constraints on the CPEC's Gwadar–Xinjiang link), in pursuit of simultaneous control over Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific.[19]

[19]Manninder Dabas, ‘Here Is All You Should Know About ‘String Of Pearls’, China’s Policy To Encircle India’, India Times, 23 June 2017. <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/here-is-all-you-should-know-about-string-of-pearls-china-s-policy-to-encircle-india-324315.html>



Map 3: Comparing Mackinder's Heartland Theory with China's Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Route.



Map 4: India's dual geographic advantages against China.

RELEVANCE FOR CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT RISK TEAMS — READING ENCIRCLEMENT PATTERNS

A 'String of Pearls' is a recognisable pattern well beyond geopolitics: a competitor quietly acquiring footholds — suppliers, ports, distribution nodes, regulatory relationships — around a rival's own core market, each individually explainable and only alarming once mapped together. Building that composite map before the pattern completes itself, the way this section reads China's own infrastructure footprint around India, is exactly the discipline a corporate supply-chain risk function or a government economic-security team needs.

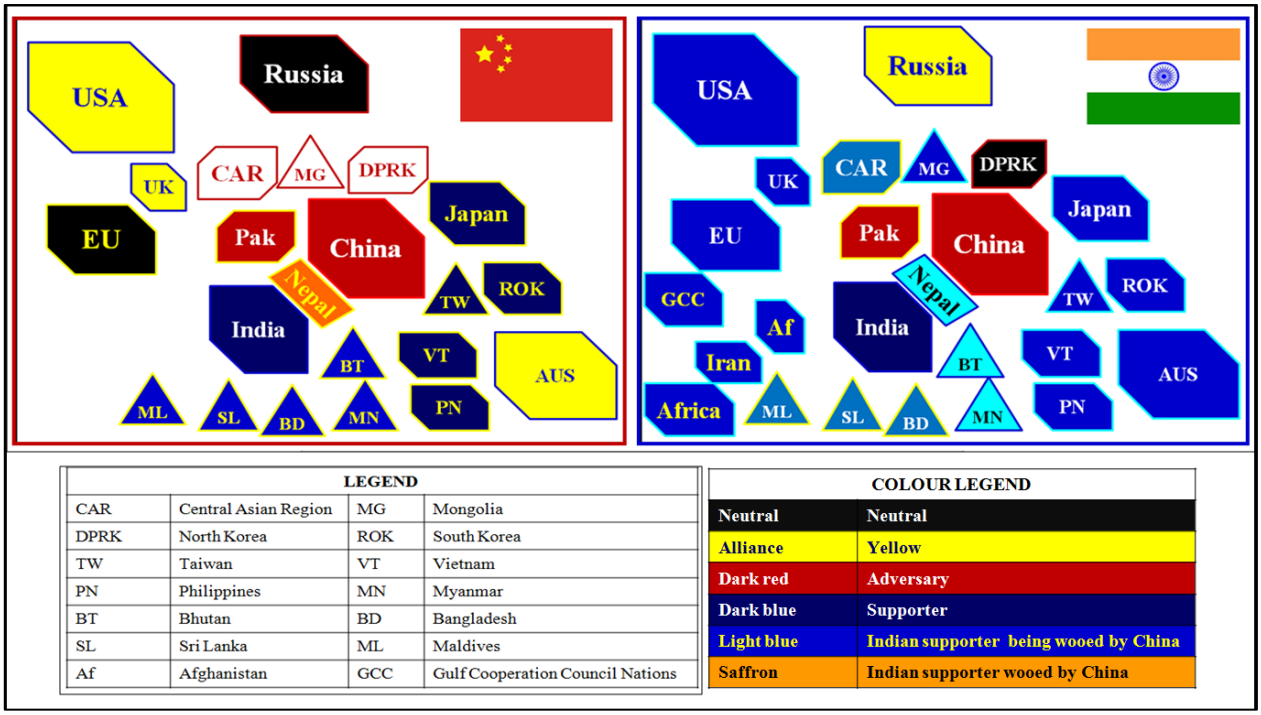
Recommendations for the Future

Today's multipolar world, with a rising China — roughly three times India's geography, five times its economy and three times its defence budget[20] — contesting the United States for the position of global hegemon, calls for new ideas and new strategy. A key Indian advantage is terrain itself: what Kautilya would call India's 'fort,' set against China's own Malacca and Himalayan dilemmas. The Himalayas give India real protection from China, and the Indian Ocean gives it real opportunity, even as those same Himalayas and the North and South China Seas constrain China's own land and maritime reach. India needs to exploit this, together with its civilisational values, its democracy and its international standing, to build its own Shakti, or national power.

Winning Peace Within India. Overcome internal-security threats (vyasanas) from foreign-sponsored societal warfare and secessionist or radical movements in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, the North-Eastern states, and areas affected by Left-Wing Extremism.

[20]Hemant Singh, '13 Parameters to Compare India and China', 17 June 2020. <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/13-parameters-to-compare-india-and-china-1487597225-1>

Breaking China's Strategic Encirclement. It is time to return to the Arthashastra and repeat the Mauryan feat: build a USD 5 trillion economy and genuine regional power. 'Nonalignment 2.0' (2012) offers a route to poverty alleviation, but its complete omission of Kautilya's Mandala and Saptanga theories leaves it without a grand strategy built on dynamic hedging and alignment.[21] India needs to build strategic partnerships (the Quad), keep 'Neighbourhood First' active to de-isolate itself, use 'Act East' to isolate China within ASEAN, and 'Look West' to isolate Pakistan within the OIC — while working, at the same time, to see the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and the Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Route all fail to gain full traction. This calls for the synergised, orchestrated use of the Shadgunya and Upaya theories, and of dharmayuddha (ethical warfare), prakashyuddha (rule-based warfare) and kutayuddha (devious warfare), applied differently across India's own circle of nations.



LEGEND			
CAR	Central Asian Region	MG	Mongolia
DPRK	North Korea	ROK	South Korea
TW	Taiwan	VT	Vietnam
PN	Philippines	MN	Myanmar
BT	Bhutan	BD	Bangladesh
SL	Sri Lanka	ML	Maldives
Af	Afghanistan	GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council Nations

COLOUR LEGEND	
Neutral	Neutral
Alliance	Yellow
Dark red	Adversary
Dark blue	Supporter
Light blue	Indian supporter being wooed by China
Saffron	Indian supporter wooed by China

Figure 2: China's strategic encirclement of India, and India's counter-Kautilyan strategy.

[21]Rajesh Rajagopalan, 'India's Strategic Choices: China and the Balance of Power in Asia', Carnegie India, 14 September 2017. <https://carnegieindia.org/2017/09/14/india-s-strategic-choices-china-and-balance-of-power-in-asia-pub-73108>

Compelling China — Immediate Status Quo. Orchestrate international diplomatic and economic isolation of China, and decouple the India–China economic relationship (no further expansion, no further trade growth) as a compellence tool to help settle the current LAC standoff.

Compelling China — Long-Term Dissuasion. Build comprehensive national power on the twin foundations of the 'Himalayan fort' and the 'Indian Ocean springboard,' through reform across diplomacy, economics, technology, the military and society. Indigenising military thought and technology needs to become the bedrock of an ever-larger comprehensive national power — and, in itself, a deterrent. In the interim, partnerships should be used to fill the gap.

Winning Peace Over Pakistan. Continue the 'No Terror & Talks' security policy, and win the peace over Pakistan through Kashmir — which strengthens India's own comprehensive national power while weakening China's.

Military Dissuasion and Compellence. Use the Himalayan mountain range and the Indian Ocean Region/Indo-Pacific as an anvil against both Pakistan and China, without becoming tied down in the Eurasian heartland, through tri-service force-projection strategy.

Conclusion

In the current standoff, China's own containment strategy for India may yet appear to hand it victory. That would be a grave strategic mistake — not unlike the Battle of Plassey (1757) or the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), both of which opened the door for the East India Company to conquer the subcontinent. NAM, the Commonwealth, ASEAN and the SCO have all been conspicuously silent on the India–China LAC standoff; anti-India sections of

the Western media, meanwhile, have taken to labelling India's post-2014 foreign-policy shift as being driven by 'Hindu nationalism' or 'Hindutva.'[22]

India needs to return to Kautilya's Arthashastra, and, with hard-nosed national will and genuine pride in its own civilisational nationalism, pursue the development of its Saptanga Prakritis and its Shaktis — so it can actively apply the Mandala, Shadgunya and Upaya theories in the service of Yogakshema: the continued, peaceful enjoyment of prosperity and welfare by its own citizens.



Picture 1: Taiwanese media, on the information war around the Galwan Standoff.

It is time India showed real national courage, and implemented an indigenous foreign policy grounded in Indic strategic thought — the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Arthashastra. This is, at heart, also the argument of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's own latest book, 'The India Way' (2020).[23]

[22]Lindsay Hughes, 'The Failure of India's "Strategic Autonomy"', Future Directions International, 10 June 2020. <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/the-failure-of-indias-strategic-autonomy/>
[23]C Raja Mohan, 'Strategic communities can learn from all traditions of statecraft. Jaishankar's book is a call to fill Indian deficit', The Indian Express, 8 September 2020. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-foreign-policy-china-border-row-ladakh-conflict-s-jaishankar-mea-6587070/>

RELEVANCE FOR CORPORATE, GOVERNMENT AND THINK-TANK AUDIENCES

This essay applies a single, disciplined framework — Kautilya's Saptanga, Mandala, Shadgunya and Upaya theories — across two and a half millennia to read a live 2020 crisis with real predictive value. That same discipline transfers directly: the Saptanga model as a rigorous internal-strength audit, the Mandala model as stakeholder and alliance mapping, and the encirclement analysis as a template for reading a rival's quiet, composite build-up of advantage before it fully matures. This is the working method I bring to strategic, risk and geopolitical analysis for corporates, government policy institutions and think tanks.