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Originally written in 2022. Adopted in 2026 for a broader audience.

A Kautilyan Multi-Domain Strategy for Winning Peace over Pakistan and China — After Kashmir's Tricolour Revolution

Sanjay P Vishwasrao, Major General, Retired

Written in 2022, in the author's 37th year of military service, after designing and leading the Tricolour Revolution Strategy in Kashmir as General Officer Commanding, Srinagar Sub Area (2020–2022) — arguing for a doctrinal shift in how the Indian military defines, and advertises, victory.

> *“Only with a strategy of taking the whole will the general find complete victory.”*
>
> **— Sun Tzu**



TRUTH, 26 JAN 2021
Tricolours at Dal by Kashmir

DECEIT, 26 JAN 2021
Pakistani fake photo-shop

Photo No. 1 is of what Kashmiris did on 26 January 2021 (9 am to 11 am).
Photo No. 2 is Pakistan’s response at 1 pm on the same day- photoshopped image of so-called flag of so-called Azad Kashmir at Dal sent to Kashmiris on WhatsApp.

WHY THIS ANALYSIS CARRIES WEIGHT

This essay was written in 2022, in the author's 37th year of military service and immediately after he designed and personally led the 'Tricolour Revolution' counter-strategy in Kashmir as General Officer Commanding, Srinagar Sub Area (2020–2022) — a campaign that helped move Jammu & Kashmir from 'dangerous and disturbed' toward genuine national integration, later referenced by India's Prime Minister. It is, in effect, a capstone: it deliberately draws together and restates the core strategic themes developed across 37 years of service, rather than introducing a new one, and argues, from that lived experience, that the Indian military — and by extension any large organisation — should market itself on outcomes won, not merely on activity sustained. It sets out a Kautilyan, multi-domain framework for winning peace over both Pakistan and China in service of Viksit Bharat 2047, and is offered to government policy institutions, senior government leaders, think tanks, podcast and institutional audiences, and corporate recruiters alike.

Introduction

The Changing Face of Victory. Up to the 19th century, when kings declared wars and defined victory, decisive military victory held sway — annihilation of the enemy until no further resistance was possible. After the Napoleonic wars, victory came to be defined by the people, and the media, for whom war is ultimately about peace and prosperity. In the 21st century's ideological, non-state conflicts fought by non-soldiers, victory is not simple to imagine, define, convey, plan for, or even claim — Operation Neptune Spear, the American raid that killed Osama bin Laden, is a case in point — and conceptualising peace is harder still.

Ways and Means for Victory and Peace. The nature of the victory sought governs the entire conflict continuum through the choice of ways and means. Both Sun Tzu and Clausewitz warned against starting a war without absolute clarity on the desired end state, even as the ingredients of victory shift while the war progresses. As explained by Antoine-Henri Jomini, victory today is

less about destroying the enemy's forces and more about imposing one's own will, with destruction of the enemy's military reduced to a limited means toward a larger end. War, therefore, cannot be only about warfare; it must pay real attention to the peace it is meant to secure. Twentieth- and twenty-first-century wars have proven that national and allied victories were always about more than success on the battlefield — Pakistan's surrender at Dhaka, and Russia's own difficulties in Ukraine, both illustrate the limits of force as a means and the short shelf-life of even a decisive military win. The Balakot surgical strike, Pakistan's whimper-free return of Wing Commander Abhinandan, and the absence of any major terror attack by Pakistan between 2019 and 2022, together reinforce just how limited decisive military victory's real value to national security actually is. India's own message during that crisis — of a *'qatal ki raat'* (night of massacre) that left Pakistan with 'maathe pe pasina' (sweat on its forehead) and *'tangein kaanp rahi thi'* (trembling legs) — not only brought Abhinandan home, but punctured the nuclear umbrella under which Pakistan had been waging proxy Fourth Generation Warfare and grey-zone warfare against India.

Questions Worth Asking. How should victory be defined? Is victory over 4GW or grey-zone warfare defined differently? What is the relationship between military and political victory — and has nuclear deterrence and the hybridisation of warfare changed that relationship? When should war-fighting stop, to make room for peace-building? What should we take from Winston Churchill's 'our policy is to wage war' and 'victory at all costs,' set against Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'we are determined not only to win the war, but to maintain the security of the peace that will follow'? How, in short, does one win both the war and the peace?

Planning Wars That Win Peace

The Utility of Decisive Military Victory to Policy. Wars are conflicts between societies, and can only be understood by examining the ideologies of the societies fighting them — the meaning and roots of victory and defeat are not to be found on the battlefield. If the military is simply a vehicle of pain used to secure compliance, is the value of a military victory to policy still directly proportional to how total that victory is? Not any more. Sun Tzu warned that war has an inherent tendency to escalate, independent of policy, logic or military prudence; Clausewitz, for his part, insisted that *'the objective of war is first and foremost to further policy.'* Yet wars are routinely fought for total military victory at the expense of the political goals that started them — the ten-year Iran–Iraq War is one example. Egypt's 1973 crossing into Sinai shows the opposite: a 20-day war that ended in the Camp David Accord, in which Egypt secured both of its real political objectives — a peace dialogue with Israel and leadership of the Arab world — despite a military defeat. North Vietnam proved the same point in 1975: the militarily weak and defeated can still win.

Fallacies That Keep Military Victory from Becoming Political Victory. Several recurring fallacies stop a military win from converting into a lasting political one:

- Ignoring the relevance of Just War theory — *jus ad bellum* (just cause), *jus in bello* (just conduct) and *jus post bellum* (just peace) — in winning both war and peace (Nazism, the absent weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and our own Army's conduct in counter-terrorist operations).
- Overestimating the payoff of military power (Napoleon in Russia, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and President Putin in Ukraine).
- Underestimating the true cost of war (the Second World War; the second Gulf War).

- Miscalculating how people will perceive victory or defeat (American public opinion on Vietnam), and assuming a defeated people will simply accept defeat (Israel's wars with Hezbollah and Hamas).
- Believing it will be easy to replace the political system of a defeated state (the second Gulf War and the ensuing Global War on Terror).
- Assuming the victorious state's post-war political arrangements will win international recognition automatically (the division of Germany; the creation of Israel).
- Misreading Pakistan's 'strategic non-violent political defiance,' run through a social-media toolkit, as anything other than war — as it has been waged in Jammu & Kashmir since 2008.[1]
- Presuming a peace treaty ends a war — it only ends the present round of it (the Tashkent and Shimla Accords, and the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquillity Agreement).
- Assuming a defeated people will simply adopt the victor's value system (Operation Enduring Freedom; Bangladesh and Pakistan).

Imposing Our Will, Not Destroying the Enemy. Clausewitz defined victory in terms of 'will,' not destruction. He also argued that war must end through diplomatic and political effort that makes the victory acceptable and sustainable — victory has to translate into real leverage over the opponent. How much leverage is achieved depends on the enemy's resilience, morale and willpower; total compliance is only possible once the enemy's physical and ideological centres of gravity have been sufficiently degraded. Victory is not freedom for unopposed violence (the Holocaust), but the freedom to secure one's own interests (democracy, for NATO). The clearest illustration is the contrast between the American victory over Japan in 1945 and over

[1]Bashir Assad, *K Files: The Conspiracy of Silence* (New Delhi: Vitasta Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2019), p. 29. The author writes: 'He (General Musharraf) suggested that separatists should recourse to Palestinian-type Intifada. The letter from Musharraf was delivered to separatists by a Pakistani senator, MP Bhandara.'

Iraq in 1991: Japan has not broken the world's trust since, whereas leaving Saddam Hussein in power in 1991 sowed the seeds of the second Gulf War (Saddam himself claimed 1991 as a victory).

Means, Will, Hope and Time. Beyond the physical dimension, victory also has a moral one — will (information) and hope (human). Material loss erodes morale, which drives further material loss, with each cycle deepening the last. As long as will and hope survive, the loss of means tends to produce a hybrid counter-attack rather than genuine defeat — the French resistance of 1940–44, and Jammu & Kashmir's own strategic non-violent political defiance since 2008, both illustrate this. Political victory follows military victory only once the enemy's means have been degraded (not necessarily destroyed), its will and hope broken, and the window for a counter-attack has genuinely closed — this is Sun Tzu's 'whole.' Was Sun Tzu describing a strategy of compellence, or of coercion — and has nuclear deterrence and hybrid warfare made the latter obsolete?

Measuring Who Won and Who Lost. Victory and defeat, though treated as opposites, sit at either end of a scale with many positions in between. Winning a tactical battle is simple; winning a war is difficult; winning the peace is complex. Tactical battles always produce a winner and a loser; wars may produce both, either, or neither (the United States and Iraq both claimed to have won the first Gulf War); peace, to last, has to be win-win for everyone involved. Robert Mandel has argued that the end state of a war has to be read through the cultural framework of each side involved[2] — every group of opinion-makers (government, elites, allies, military, media, citizens) will read the same outcome differently, which makes any single assessment of victory genuinely difficult. A fuller assessment needs three separate scales:[3]

[2]Robert Mandel, *The Meaning of Military Victory* (USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, January 2006).
[3]J.B. Bartholomees, 'Theory of Victory', *Parameters*, Vol. 38, No. 2, US Army War College, 2008.

- **Scale of Achievement (tactical/operational).** Runs from 'none' and 'negligible' through 'measurable' to 'significant' and 'total.' These outcomes are easy to measure and, once recorded, do not change.
- **Scale of Success (strategic).** Runs from 'defeat' and 'not lose' through 'tie' to 'win' and 'victory.' It is a cumulative product of many tactical and operational results, but those results alone do not guarantee strategic success — genuine strategic victory requires a political settlement of some permanence, and can be revised if political beliefs shift over time.
- **Scale of Decisiveness (political).** Runs from 'exacerbate' and 'deteriorate' through 'status quo' to 'solution' and 'resolution.' This is the hardest scale to measure, and the one most likely to be revised as time passes.

Orchestrating Peace, Not Just Victory, in War. Victory has to be defined across all its component parts — perception, military, economic, diplomatic, ideological and political — for it to become the foundation of an effective strategy. A nation's power of resistance is the product of its total means (military, scientific, economic, human) and the strength of its will (government, military, people).[4] Victory is achieved once the enemy's resistance is degraded to an ineffective level, whether through the erosion of its means or the collapse of its will. Attacking an enemy's means is attrition warfare, and leaves the enemy's will intact — a long, costly path. Attacking an enemy's will, to make it quit, is manoeuvre warfare. Which should be broken first — means or will? And whose will — the government's, the military's, or the people's? Clausewitz's own answer stands: 'The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.' In conventional war, an attritionist approach targets

[4]Colin S. Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory* (USA: Lulu.com, July 2014).

'means' and a manoeuvrist approach targets 'will'— either way, the will of the enemy's government and military must ultimately be broken, as with Saddam Hussein during the second Gulf War. In unconventional war, it is the will — the belief — of the people that matters most, whether Sunnis supporting ISIS or separatists in Kashmir. In either case, the enemy's military defeat is not strictly essential, but a visible, leverage-able setback usually is. Sun Tzu's own guidance — subdue the enemy without a fight, seek battle only after victory is already won, break the enemy's resistance without fighting, and attack the enemy's strategy — points toward a 'whole,' political victory: the enemy compelled to accept peace on terms that embrace one's own ideology or policy. The Tricolour Revolution initiated in Kashmir after Article 370 ceased to operate is built on exactly this idea.

Shifting Gears from War-Fighting to Peace-Winning. General Douglas MacArthur was strategic when he said of post-war Japan, *'we must go forward to preserve in peace what we won in war'* — yet sounded purely tactical a few years later, on Korea, when he said, 'in war there can be no substitute for victory.' That contradiction is exactly the difficulty in moving from war to peace. Sun Tzu's own caution applies: one does not have to be fully victorious in war to win the peace, nor does the enemy have to be rendered powerless for one's will to prevail. Political intent and military mission must be defined with precision from the outset; a simple order for 'decisive military victory' is easily misread — witness the excessive use of force in Vietnam, or the lack of preparedness for Iraq's Sunni insurgency after 2003. For peace to hold, a military victory must pass three tests: tactical attainability, strategic sustainability, and political usability. Focusing on attainability alone leaves victory to chance; sustainability is what political and military leaders should actually be optimising for — Galwan and Kashmir both illustrate this. The gods of war have limited the number of lives a general can spend on either side. Military operations must always stay

focused on political objectives — 'solution' or 'resolution' on the scale of success — rather than on military victory alone, so that a minimum-essential military win can serve as a coercive lever toward those objectives. As Liddell Hart put it, *'if you concentrate exclusively on victory, with no thought for the after-effect, you may be too exhausted to profit from the peace.'* The post-war military situation needs a clear definition of 'strategic success' and 'strategic advantage' — short of annihilation — interpreted consistently at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, so the war itself is never conducted in a way that undermines the peace that follows it, as when war and soldiering come to serve themselves or an uncertain political leadership (Musharraf's Kargil, and performance metrics built purely on kinetic results in counter-terrorism theatres from Jammu & Kashmir to Manipur). This is also how strategy keeps military means genuinely tied to political goals, with commanders balancing military effort against political effect through doctrine and metrics that evolve as the conflict does. As a war moves toward its end, grand strategy and military strategy have to be kept separate, so that policy is never captured by military aims. Liddell Hart's further warning holds too: *'imposing a peace of entirely your own choosing... will reverse the settlement achieved by war,'* as the aftermath of the First World War later demonstrated. A durable transition to peace needs a visible, minimum-essential military victory, a genuine political settlement, and justice for people on all sides — the last two mattering more than the conduct of the war itself. Exactly when to shift from war-fighting to peace-winning is, in the end, an intelligence judgement for political and military leaders alike: shift too early and bargaining power is lost; shift too late and lives are lost needlessly.

Victory and Peace over 4GW and Grey-Zone Warfare. In Fourth Generation and grey-zone warfare, the end state may be easy to describe but hard to measure. Such conflicts typically end through the exhaustion of the people, an outright government military victory, a negotiated political

settlement, or the removal of any incentive to fight on. Of 134 civil wars fought this century, 117 have ended — 81 (60%) through military victory, 24 (18%) through negotiated settlement, and 12 (9%) through ceasefire.[5] That data suggests military victory in this kind of war tends to serve people well in the long run, but it is not the whole truth: victory can never be final until the underlying ideology itself is defeated. For a committed adversary — the Taliban among them — time is never the constraint, as long as some means remain and hope in the ideology persists. Where means and hope both survive, the result is perpetual conflict, as with Pakistan's long-running proxy jihad against India. In a contest of ideologies, military victory has to lead to an ideological victory and a peace acceptable to everyone. The post-war political landscape must be shaped before and during the war's termination, not after it. The classical distinctions of jus ad bellum, jus in bello and jus post bellum matter even more here, because culture shapes the ways, means, ends and very notion of victory far more than in conventional war. Excessive force tends only to strengthen the very ideas it was meant to defeat, as in Gaza, and as with the idea of azadi in Kashmir. Kinetic tools can destroy an enemy's will where it is nested in physical means relatively easily; destroying hope and ideology nested deep in belief is far harder, short of neutralising every believer, as in the final defeat of the LTTE in Eelam War IV. Because the physical components of victory in this kind of war are typically short-lived, the main effort has to focus on political and ideological victory: each tactical or operational win must be converted quickly into strategic, ideological success, or strategy will never truly balance the ends sought against the means available, as it failed to in Vietnam and Iraq. Sun Tzu's own formula — *'the victorious military is first victorious and after that goes to battle'* — may read like a Rubik's Cube puzzle, but remains the only real answer: manoeuvring into a position of advantage so decisive that victory

[5]Monica D. Toft, *Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars* (USA: Princeton, 2009).

follows almost automatically, or is nudged into place by a single blow at the source of the enemy's power — its strategy, or its ideology. The loss of faith in that ideology is the real tipping point toward defeat, the victory that precedes the battle. Whether Sri Lanka's more attritionist approach to annihilating LTTE fighters ahead of its ideology proves Sun Tzu wrong, or whether Sri Lanka has simply not yet won the peace, remains an open question. The people of Kashmir replacing 'Azadi' with the Tricolour since 2021 is exactly this kind of tipping point — the defeat, in the minds of the people, of the Pakistan-led anti-India nexus in Jammu & Kashmir.

Lessons for a Multi-Domain Strategy. Weaker states or actors have won roughly 30% of all wars, generally through greater political resolve (the Vietcong) or the stronger side's wrong choice of counter-strategy (the Soviet Union in Afghanistan).[6] Pakistan fits this pattern too: it treats retaining the ability to challenge India as victory in itself, and genuinely believes it has 'won' all four wars against India, its will (the Two-Nation Theory) and hope left intact each time. Against China's People's Liberation Army, India faces something closer to a hundred-year marathon. The wider lesson for strategists is that the exchange between military effort and political effect is inherently uncertain, because the other side may simply refuse to accept defeat on the terms one is willing to use to impose it — as the Vietcong, the Taliban, Pakistan, and Galwan have all shown in their own ways. Conflicting perceptions of victory among stakeholders on both sides add still more uncertainty to the political effect any military action produces, and victory itself is hard to translate into a lasting political outcome — some signs of it are not easily visible, and early operational wins are routinely mistaken for strategic ones. There is no fixed formula for victory or peace, since every contest differs, and what works today will not necessarily work tomorrow simply because it worked today. The one durable truth is that better-led

[6]Ivan Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars* (USA: Cambridge Studies in International Relations, 2001).

militaries — not merely those transformed by a Revolution in Military Affairs — tend to win: technology alone is not a driver of victory; political judgement and a genuinely better culture are the real force-multipliers. This holds directly for India's own strategy to move Jammu & Kashmir from 'dangerous and disturbed' to national integration, as the Armed Forces (Jammu & Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990, envisages, for the eventual recapture of Pakistan-occupied J&K, and for deterring China. Three lessons follow: first, the political end state of a war must be defined explicitly at the outset; second, political control over the war — including how and when it ends — is non-negotiable for success; third, nuclear deterrence and the hybridisation of warfare mean decisive military victory may now be neither desirable nor achievable, and that limited goals which help impose one's will are more practical. In Jammu & Kashmir today, imposing the Tricolour matters more than neutralising the last terrorist.

CORPORATE PARALLEL — REWARD OUTCOMES WON, NOT ACTIVITY SUSTAINED

The same trap operates inside any organisation: a team or a leader who markets themselves on hours logged, initiatives launched or crises perpetually managed — 'forever in operations' — ends up rewarded for busyness rather than for a durable result. For a corporate recruiter, this is often the single most useful question to ask a candidate for a strategy, turnaround or transformation role: can they point to an outcome actually won and closed out, or only to a long, uninterrupted record of activity? Thirty-seven years of service is only worth as much as the peace, the turnaround, or the result it can point to — and that is the standard this essay argues the Indian military, and any serious institution, should be judged against.

An Indic Multi-Domain, Multi-Dimension Strategy

Kautilya's Arthashastra sets out four theories of national security, explained below.

The Theory of Shakti (National Power).[7] Kautilya lists seven Prakritis that generate three kinds of Shakti: Mantra-shakti (soft power), Prabhav-shakti (hard power), and Utsaha-shakti — the power of leadership and the armed forces that drives the other Prakritis. These three Shaktis interact to produce a state's National Shakti, or what would today be called comprehensive national power.

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: The Theory of Shakti.

[7] R.P. Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra (Part 2)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1972), pp. 314–316.

RELEVANCE FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY INSTITUTIONS — A NATIONAL POWER AUDIT

Kautilya's seven Prakritis are a ready-made checklist for any government policy review that claims to assess 'national power': leadership and cohesion, the quality of advisors and intelligence, territory and people, defensibility, treasury, security forces, and the force-multiplying effect of genuine alliances. Most policy assessments quietly collapse this into economic and military metrics alone; the Saptanga model insists on scoring leadership cohesion and alliance depth just as rigorously — precisely the softer factors a think tank is best placed to bring into a national-power assessment.

The Upaya Theory of Expedients of National Security Policy. The four upayas, or approaches to national-security objectives, are sama (alliances), dana (compensation), bheda (divide and rule) and danda (armaments) — echoed in Hans Morgenthau's own 'Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace' (1966).[8]

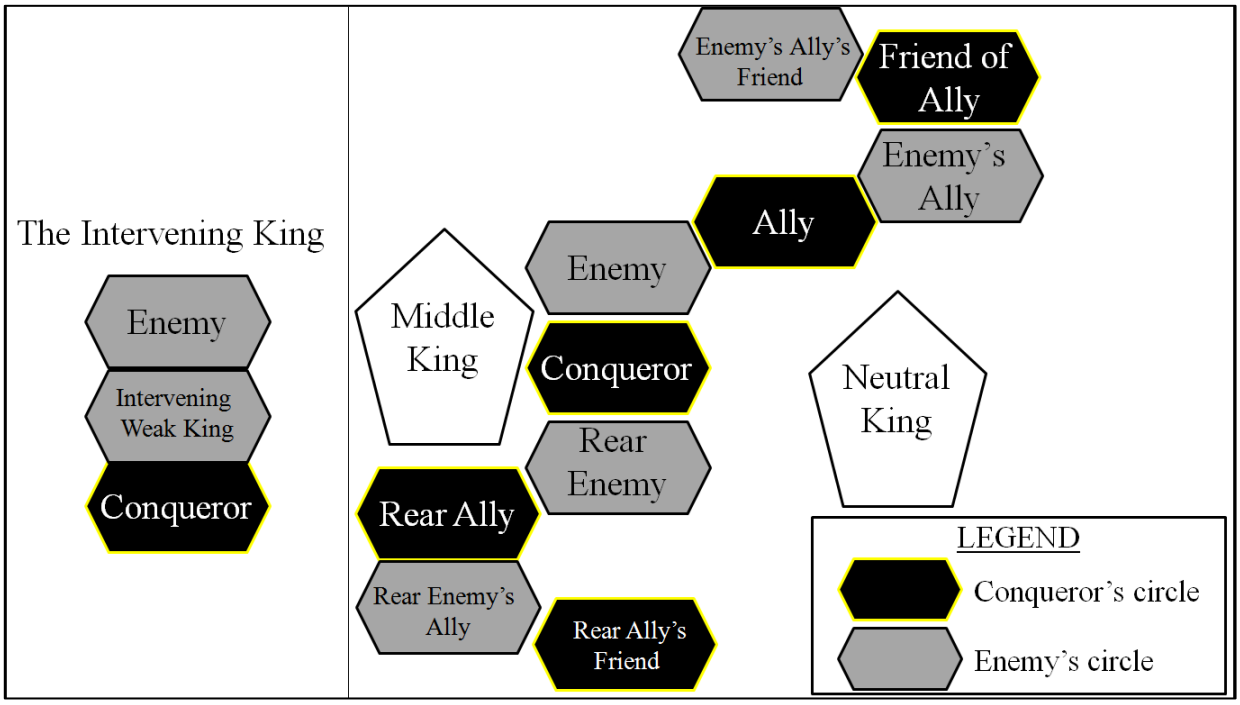


Figure 1: The Mandala, or Circle of States, Theory.

[8]P.K. Gautam, 'Understanding Kautilya's Four Upayas', IDSA Journal, IDSA, 20 June 2013. <https://idsa.in/idsacomments/UnderstandingKautilyasFourUpayas_pkgautam_200613>

The Mandala Theory of the Circle of States. Kautilya holds that every king, or state, sits within a circle of allies — the conqueror or challenger, an enemy, a middle king, and a neutral king — illustrated above following L.N. Rangarajan's rendering of the Arthashastra (2017). 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.

RELEVANCE FOR THINK TANKS AND STRATEGIC ANALYSTS

The Mandala model gives a think tank a disciplined way to brief a region that resists a simple friend/foe map: naming the middle king, the neutral king, and the rear ally each in turn, and asking which lever — alliance, compensation, division or force — actually moves each one. It is a genuinely useful structure for a briefing, a podcast conversation, or a policy paper trying to explain why a neighbourhood's alignments keep shifting rather than settling.

An Indic Multi-Domain, Multi-Dimension Strategy. Winning peace against a revisionist Pakistan waging hybrid warfare, and an increasingly assertive China waging irregular, informationalised warfare, requires genuine multi-domain and multi-dimension capability. Operational art has to stitch together the interplay of five domains — land, air, sea, space and cyber — to create non-linear, calibrated, synergised and converged dilemmas across the physical, information and human dimensions of every critical vulnerability and requirement of the centre of gravity, and of the centre of gravity itself, of Pakistan and China alike (see the figure below).[9]

[9]Arushi Singh, 'Multi Domain Operations and India', Wavell Room, 10 November 2021.

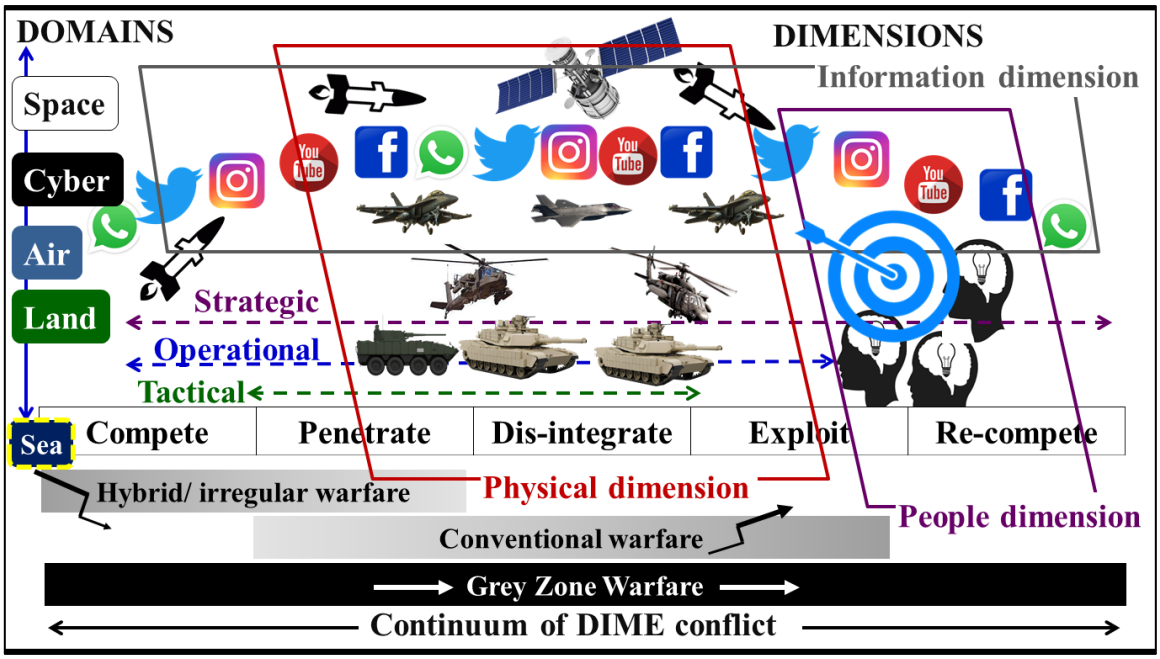


Figure 2: A multi-domain and multi-dimensional strategy (adopted from US Army FM 3.0 and modified to suit the recommended strategy).

RELEVANCE FOR SENIOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS — MULTI-DOMAIN THINKING BEYOND THE MILITARY

The same 'compete–penetrate–disintegrate–exploit–re-compete' logic that structures this multi-domain military framework applies to any whole-of-government challenge that spans ministries, levels of government and the information space at once — economic coercion, disinformation, or a coordinated diplomatic and economic campaign. Senior leaders rarely lack domain-specific expertise; what a framework like this supplies, is the discipline to synchronise those domains toward one converged effect, rather than let each ministry run its own uncoordinated campaign.

Orchestrating the Strategy Against Pakistan

The Starting Block — Kashmir. In the Mandala way — diplomatic, informational, military and economic — the starting block in winning peace over Pakistan, and then China, is winning peace within: in Jammu & Kashmir. The first step in winning political peace there is correctly identifying the centre of gravity of the Pakistan-led anti-India nexus

operating in J&K. Following Clausewitz's own definition of a centre of gravity as 'the centripetal force holding the enemy structure together and that which gives the enemy purpose and direction,' the nexus's centre of gravity in J&K is the idea of azadi — itself intricately bound up with the Two-Nation Theory. As a corollary, Pakistan's own centre of gravity is the idea of the Two-Nation Theory itself. Destroying azadi, for the national integration of Kashmir, has the potential to bring lasting peace not just to J&K but to India as a whole — and the domino or butterfly effect of that destruction may well undermine the Two-Nation Theory too.

Victory Over Pakistan Before the War. Destroying the idea of azadi and the idea of the Two-Nation Theory sets the stage for military victory over Pakistan, and for eventual political and societal peace. Sequencing peace in J&K and Pakistan's ideological defeat ahead of any destruction of its military would be entirely in keeping with Sun Tzu's 'the victorious military is first victorious and after that goes to battle.' Reversing that sequence — military defeat first — would be a grave strategic mistake. Routine counter-terrorist and civic-action operations, a foreign policy of 'No Terror & Talks' with Pakistan, and even an air-land offensive to capture Muzaffarabad, will none of them be enough to destroy Pakistan's centre of gravity for societal peace.[10]

Destroying an Ideology Is a Non-Kinetic Task. Pascal Nazareth has observed that, in asymmetric warfare, 'the Gandhian path of attacking the root cause of conflicts is the safest for leaders and nations to follow.'[11] Destroying the centre of gravity of azadi and the Two-Nation Theory, in the minds and hearts of those who believe in them, is primarily a non-kinetic, multi-domain, multi-dimension task. It calls for an entirely new J&K strategy built on four prongs: first, attack the nexus's centre of gravity; second, defend

[10]Linda Robinson, Todd C. Helmus, Raphael S. Cohen, Alireza Nader, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson and Katya Migacheva, *Modern Political Warfare: Current Practices and Possible Responses* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), pp. 236–239. At https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html
[11]Pascal Alan Nazareth, *Gandhi the Soul Force Warrior* (New Delhi: Wisdom Tree, 2019), p. 81.

our own centre of gravity, the idea of India; third, defend against the nexus's own strategic non-violent political defiance; and fourth, engineer a smarter, non-violent Tricolour Revolution of our own. In Jammu & Kashmir, India is already at 'Phase 0' of this contest — setting the stage for victory through preliminary offensive and defensive operations — and work to undo the ideas of azadi and the Two-Nation Theory has to begin now: waiting for the formal start of a conventional war to begin this work is planning for failure.

Orchestrating the Strategy Against China

Identifying China's Centre of Gravity. Applying Joe Strange's reading of Clausewitz's centre of gravity — the 'hub of all power' 'on which everything depends' — to China, the Chinese Communist Party is that centre of gravity, precisely as Mao Zedong himself described it in 1957: 'the CCP is the core of leadership of the whole Chinese people.'[12] Its critical strengths are the political resilience, or will, of its cadres (its own 'Mandate of Heaven'), the national means available to it through the Central Military Commission, economic prosperity, and domestic stability. Its critical vulnerabilities are the CCP's lack of political accountability, its limited crisis-management capacity, the risk of political liberalisation, minority and rural discontent, and an increasingly unfavourable demographic profile.

China's Achilles Heels. Tibet, Taiwan and the Uyghur Muslims are China's Achilles heels, magnified respectively by the Himalayas, the South China Sea, and Islamic terrorism across the Af-Pak region and Central Asia. Exploited together, with India's own geographic 'fort' as the pivot, these can worsen the CCP's critical vulnerabilities and expose its critical strengths to sustained pressure, ultimately working toward the Party's collapse — a

[12]James T. Abernethy Jr., 'The Chinese Communist Party: A Strategic Centre of Gravity Analysis', US Army War College, January 2012.

dynamic already visible in the aftermath of the Galwan clash of 15–16 June 2020.[13]



Map: China's Achilles heels versus India's geographic 'fort' (adopted from Mackinder's Heartland Theory, Kaplan's 'The Revenge of Geography,' and Sanyal's 'Brief History of India's Geography').

Destroying the Chinese Communist Party's grip requires influence operations aimed at idea-capitulation in the information dimension, and limited military victory in the physical dimension, across every domain — in service of peace in the human dimension. A thousand warheads pointed at foreheads are less disruptive, in this contest, than 140 characters and a picture or video on social media.[14]

Conclusion

India's enemies are using Fourth Generation and grey-zone warfare, built on strategic non-violent political defiance, to set India's own internal fault lines alight and weaken it from within. Ignoring this would be calamitous — not unlike the Battle of Plassey (1757) or the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), both

[13]Lieutenant General 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/>

[14]Major Kimber Nettis, 'Multi-Domain Operations: Bridging the Gap for Dominance', Wild Blue Yonder, USAF Air University, 16 March 2020.

of which opened the way for the East India Company to conquer the subcontinent. An Indian strategy of coercion by military means, aimed at resolving what are fundamentally ideological problems, has produced strategic dissonance — internally, and with both Pakistan and China. The starting point for India's national-security strategy has to be the political objectives already set out in the Armed Forces (Jammu & Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990: victory over Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, and defeat of Pakistan-fuelled secessionism and radicalism. Maurice Hankey's own advice is worth holding onto: 'The first aim in war is to win, the second aim is to prevent defeat, the third is to shorten it, and the fourth and most important, which must never be lost sight of, is to make a just and durable peace.'

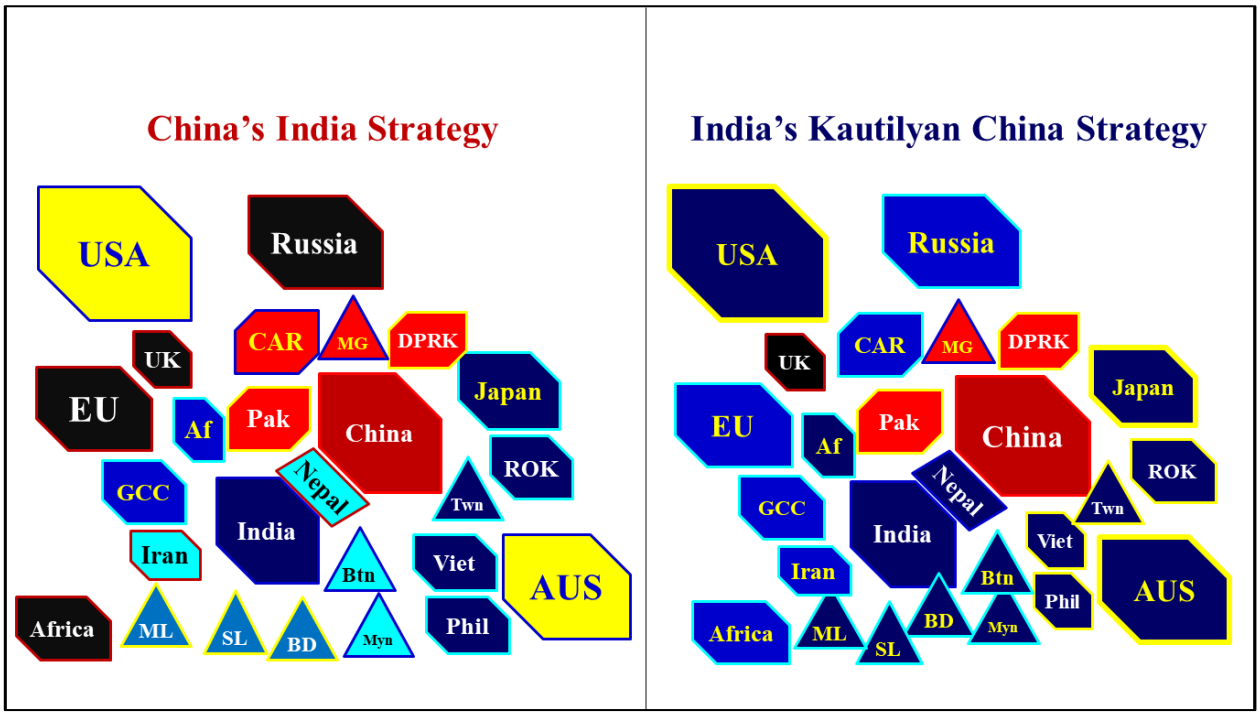


Figure 3: Applying the Mandala strategy against the String of Pearls, using the Quad, ASEAN and other groupings.

China has been using Sun Tzu's Thirty-Six Stratagems against India — 'kill with a borrowed knife,' 'watch the fire burning from across the river,' and 'befriend a distant state while attacking a neighbouring one.' India's own reactions, built on 'Satyameva Jayate' (truth alone triumphs), have by contrast been largely linear. An India protected by an army that markets itself as

'forever in operations' needs instead to return to Kautilya's Arthashastra, with hard-nosed national will and pride in its own civilisational nationalism, to develop its national Saptanga Prakritis and Shaktis — Mantra-shakti (soft power), Prabhav-shakti (hard power) and Utsaha-shakti (the power and drive of its leaders and security forces) — so it can actively apply the Mandala, Shadgunya and Upaya theories (figure above) in the service of Yogakshema: the continued, peaceful enjoyment of prosperity and welfare by its citizens.[15] It is time the Indian Army moved beyond a 'summer strategy' and 'winter strategy' focused narrowly on the survival of soldiers in winter-cut-off posts, toward a long-term, multi-domain, multi-dimension, three-front Indic strategy for peace.[16] That strategy needs techno-commanders, techno-soldiers and techno-Agniveers, full of Utsaha-shakti, for the nation's Mantra-shakti and Prabhav-shakti to fully manifest. This is, at heart, also the argument of External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's book, 'The India Way' (2020).[17]

End Note. Britain, under Churchill, won the Second World War but lost its empire; the United States, under Roosevelt, won the same war and went on to build a new world order around American values. The difference between the two was not the war itself, but strategic culture — the former tactically superb, the latter strategically superb. Jammu & Kashmir already sits at 'Phase 0' — a political war[18] — of the wider contest with the Pakistan-led anti-India nexus in J&K, with Pakistan, and with China. Only a Kautilyan, multi-domain, multi-dimension, long-term theatre strategy — one that wins peace by turning foes into friends (Fred Iklé, 'Every War Must End,' 1971)

[15]Lieutenant Colonel Malay Mishra, 'Unique Approach to Comprehensive National Power through the Lens of Kautilya's Arthashastra', USI Journal, January–March 2017, USI.
[16]Major General G. Shankaranarayanan (retd), 'Multi-Domain Operations: Is India Ready', Raksha Anirveda, 6 June 2021.
[17]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/>
[18]Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., 'How We Fight: Army Issues All-New Handbook for Multi-Domain War', Breaking Defense, 10 October 2022.

through reconciliation, by influencing the behaviour, decision-making and will to fight of one's adversaries — can deliver Yogakshema for all Indians.

RELEVANCE FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY INSTITUTIONS, CORPORATE RECRUITERS, SENIOR LEADERS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

This essay makes a specific, arguable case — that a military, a nation, or any organisation should market itself on outcomes won, not activity sustained — from someone who had already designed and led exactly that kind of campaign in Kashmir before writing it, in his 37th year of service. It offers government policy institutions and senior leaders a doctrinal argument worth debating at the highest level, corporate recruiters a working case study in what a completed, durable result actually looks like versus mere longevity of activity, and think tanks and podcast audiences a rare, first-person account of applying Kautilyan strategic thought to an active, high-stakes national-security problem. I am available to brief, write for, and speak to this argument — and the 37 years of results behind it — directly.