An ancient vision on the contemporary geopolitical structures: Kautalya and the Indo-Pacific

Abstract

Among the ancient Indian literatures, Kautalya's Arthashashtra is a good approach to understand the contemporary geopolitical structures of the world from the point of India's world-view. A careful reading of the Arthashashtra would reveal that Kautalya focused on inter-state relations in terms of peace (*Shamah*) and conflict or war (*Vigraha*), both. He also explained the conditions under which states would be inclined more to maintain peace than to conduct war against each-other. Kautalya does not understand peace in its own right. Peace is a condition that is dependent on other conditions to be fulfilled. Secondly, his emphasis was more on the internal factors that may influence the external behavioural pattern of the State. Internal prosperity, stability and peace, to Kautalya, were the key to the State's powerful position in the world. More significant is the fact that, Kautalya explains all these on the basis of underlying geopolitical structures. The proposed study intends to explore "the empirical" and "the scientific" in Kautalya's Arthashashtra. Based on that, it intends to establish that such theories may arise in a given context, but the value that they contain may have universal applicability, only if the parameters are carefully chosen and applied to different contexts.

Introduction

A few clarifications should be in place, before I go to my arguments as regards understanding the relationship between Kautalyan Arthashashtra and the contemporary 'geopolitical structures', with special reference to the 'Indo-Pacific'. First, I do not intend to assert that Kautalya actually had something to say on the 'geo-political construct' that we endeveaour to understand as 'Indo-Pacific' today. My endeavour to bring out the salience of politics that Kautalya studied and explained thousands of years ago and its relevance in the context of contemporary geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific. There is actually a 'core' to the politics of a geopolitical region what can possibly be understood as the 'essence of politics'. This needs to be understood with respect to the power arrangements in the international system, which drive the behaviour of states. Significantly, Kautalyan theory does suggest that there is a kind of pattern in the way the states are arranged geographically and this pattern would help understand the kind of behaviour one state may have towards the other. While details of these arguments would be explained more in the following sentences, the second clarification that I intend to underline is the fact that Kautalya's Arthshashtra[1], which has been criticised for the

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[1] Here I prefer to go with Mahamahopadhyaya T Ganapati Sastri while spelling the name of the author of the Arthashashtra as 'Kautalya', and not 'Kautilya'. As Mahamahopadhyaya Sastri explains that of the three names

lack of "historical sense" and "empirical concreteness" (Modelski, 1964: 550) needs to be seen in the right perspective. For one, the work itself represents an important phase in Indian history, and second, the work needs to be seen as an endeavour of the author to offer theoretical generalisations for the issues that continue to remain the focus of study in the field of politics.[2] They, in addition, are valuable guidelines for the rulers/governments/practitioners of the art of politics. The level of theoretical generalisations on various aspects of state, government and governance, taxation, inter-state and international trade and inter-state and international politics, among others, that one finds in the Arthashashtra would not have been achieved without an empirical study of the variety of political systems that might have existed at that point in India's history.

This leads to my third clarification that in many ways, Kautalya's ideas were one of te precursors to the various theoretical streams in the sub-branches of *political science* that we study and research in the contemporary times like public policy, international politics/relations, peace and conflict studies/resolution, and security and strategic studies, among others. And, finally, which is theme of the paper, a careful reading of Arthashashtra would indicate that an elaborate understanding of various conditions that may lead to war (*Vigraha*) and/or peace (*Shamah*) can be understood when one analyses the various internal and external factors affecting the functioning of a state that Arthashashtra refers to. Kautalya's ideas, in some way or the other, anticipate what today we study, teach and research in the field of geopolitics. The contents of the Arthashashtra are rich throughout in terms of providing the ideas on 'geopolitics'. This is interesting to note that Books VI and VII can especially be focused for this purpose. My paper is an endeavour to explore the roots of some of the contemporary themes in the discipline of geopolitics, with reference to these two chapters in the Arthashashtra.

My endeavour is to focus on what possibly can be termed as the 'core issues' in the field of geopolitics. These core issues have been understood with reference to factors of geography and how the latter becomes an important element in making a power dominant in the international system. Western classical geopolitical thinkers like Alfred Thayer Mahan, H J Mackinder and Nicholas J Spykman understood it with reference to the role that control over

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of the author, the name Kautalya was derived from his Gotra name, which was Kutala. As per Mahamahopadhyaya Sastri, the name Kautilya is "certainly a misnomer". See Kautalya (1924) *Arthashashtra*, ed., Ganapati Sastri, Mahamahopadhyaya T, Trivendrum: Government Press, 1924, p. 4.

[2] The literature treats economics, military science, social structures, etc. as integral part of politics.

land and/or water, and human resources may play in this regard.[3] In addition, the changes, internal and external may bring about change in the existing pattern where a particular geopolitical region may rise in significance. This has been studied by Samuel Barnard Cohen with respect to the rise of East Asia, with China as a dominant player as a new geostrategic realm.[4] The discourse, generally, focuses on capabilities of a state to influence the politics in the region with its given power or to prevent a likely power from influencing the happenings in its 'sphere of influence'. In either case, understanding of what may cause conflict becomes important. The endeavour, thus, becomes to understand the causal factors that may lead to conflicts or wars.

Although there have been developments in the sister disciplines (Peace and Conflict Studies, for instance) where the study has focused on the factors, which if addressed and conditions, which if achieved would result in prevention of conflicts or the absence of war. Alternatively, peace would also be understood positively where it is not a condition of absence of conflict or war but a condition, which "denotes the simultaneous presence of many desirable states of mind and society, such as harmony, justice, equity, etc" (Webel, 2007: 6). Overall, security in its broad dimension becomes the goal that is to be achieved for the purpose of peace. The various aspects of security may include from what is required for the individual and the community on the one hand, and on the other, at the national, regional and international level. Security, in its broader dimension, includes not only physical security, but also in a positive sense that would enable the persons to enjoy their lives. Also, the focus would be to understand the role of various factors, including the role of actors, state and none-state, etc.

My view is that in the approach to understand conflict and/or peace the focus has been to understand primarily conflict first. In other words, the discourse has always been dominated by the theories which have maintained that defining or understanding peace in itself or something which may be intrinsic to the society or the individuals has proved to be an illusion. What we understand peace is nothing but absence of conflict. Conflict, especially, in the inter-state relations is at best managed and it is under those conditions that states can endeavour to attain their other goals, but for that maintenance of security becomes the primary function of the state. Other theories too have given importance to the role of conflict

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[3] See Alfred T Mahan (1989). *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co.; Halford J Mackinder (1904). "The Geographical Pivot of History", *The Geographical Journal*, vol XXIII, no. 4, April; Nicholas J Spykman (1944). *The Geography of Peace*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

[4] S B Cohen (2014). *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations*. Washington: Rowman & Littlefield.

in inter-state relations and intra-state interactions, but have taken the approach, where cooperation and inter-dependence is given more importance in the analysis. Theories also give place to individual level variables to understand conflict and the possibilities to attain peace. In a recent development in the field, Johan Galtung and his colleagues have argued that the need is to understand the relationship between structures that operate at various levels and the kind of violence that they give rise to. Hence, the understanding of peace that prevailed in the literature was mainly negative in nature, as it meant simply absence of violence or absence of organised violence, to be precise. Hence, the focus of research should be positive peace, understood as "the sum total of other relatively consensual values in the world community of nations" like cooperation, freedom from fear and want and of action, economic growth, equality, justice, absence of exploitation, dynamism and pluralism (Galtung, 1967: 15-17).

The endeavour, overall, in the field has been to understand the individual-level, meso-level and system-level variables, which may lead to conflict or produce conditions of 'peace'. These endeavours are taking place at a different time in human history. However, elements of these thoughts were present in Kautalya's Arthshashtra. The statement may need qualification. One, the context, of course, was different. The state and government and the relationship of the two with the people did not mean the same thing what we understand today. However, the definitions and concepts that may have been used to understand the happenings in the ancient Indian society can find its application. Second, the kind of research that is taking place in the field today with focus more on empirical data and use of technology needs to be seen differently when one is analysing the contents in Kautalya's Arthashashtra. Kautalya's Arthshashtra is based on empirical understanding to the extent that he reached generalisations through his individual observation of the political and social systems that existed during that point of time in history. The data, in a compiled form, of course, is not present as an evidence of empirical proof. The statements in the Arthashashtra need to be substantiated more with the use of reasoning and logic than any search for empirical data, as, possibly, would be the case with most of the ancient literatures. In addition, lack of historical reference may have to do more with the kind of educational tradition that was being followed in the ancient Indian society. Finally, the objective is to bring forth those elements in the literature, which the discipline of geopolitics can use for the benefit of research and study, and mankind. The idea is to bring forth contributions from the ancient Indian literature that would help enrich the discipline.

Themes in Contemporary Geopolitical Discourse

Peace cannot be understood in its own right. The concept needs to be understood and defined in terms of its relationship with war and conflicts. The idea is not to understand the varieties that can be attached to the two concepts of war/conflict and peace. The idea is to throw open the debate for simplification and understanding with respect to the societies that face conditions of conflict/war and have the ambition to move towards the conditions of peace. To highlight this point is important because the efforts to resolve conflicts is not something that exists in its own right, but they have acquired significance because various societies have faced conflicts and wars throughout their history.

Having stated that, it is pertinent to look at the debates that are happening in the contemporary geopolitical world. I think that, among other developments, India's rise and China's assertion dominate the theme. India's rising profile with the becoming of Narendra Modi as India's Prime Minister and the Chinese One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative are examples that need to be examined in the context of the evolving geopolitical order in the region. This brings the focus further on the emerging geopolitical construct that is gaining currency as "Indo-Pacific". "Indo-Pacific" could be understood with reference to the following characteristics:

> Sitting atop strategic trade routes linking the West with East Asia, India is the fulcrum of a region spreading from Bab-al–Mandab and the Straits of Hormuz through the Malacca and the South China Sea to Australia and the Western Pacific. The wider Indo-Pacific region, spreading from India to the Western Pacific, is home to over 3.5 billion people, with a combined Gross Domestic Product of over $20 trillion. It has three of the four largest economies in the world, i.e., China, Japan and India, and a substantive part of the world's seaborne trade, including that required for food and energy security (Singh, 2014: 96).

While geographical demarcation may be indicative, what is important is the potential of the region to influence the geopolitical happenings across the globe and emergence of the significant actors who potentially could influence the happenings of the world politics. In the whole process, the geography that a region commands, either directly or through exercise of its influence is important. It is in this respect that significance of geography and spatial arrangements come in as tools of analysis.

As stated above, the classical geopolitical thinkers have given significant considerations to geography and the spatial arrangements that may influence the happenings of the world. Technology has achieved new heights where distance poses little challenge to the nation-states and access to different geographical locations can also happen with little difficulty. The process of globalisation and rise of information age have made cross-border interaction and movement of people, products and capital significantly easy. However, territory, both land and maritime and the state's desire to control territories directly or through some means continue to shape the behavior of the nation states. For Mackinder it was the Heartland:

> "The conception of Euro-Asia to which we thus attain is that of a continuous land, ice-girt in the north, water-girt elsewhere, measuring 21 million square miles, or more than three times the area of North America, whose centre and north, measuring some 9 million square miles, or more than twice the area of Europe, have no available water-ways to the ocean, but, on the other hand, except in the subarctic forest, are very generally favourable to the mobility of horsemen and camelmen." (Mackinder, 1904: 431).

This was in contrast to what Mahan had seen in terms of the role of sea power in achieving world domination. For Mahan, geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, number of population, national character and character and policy of governments were important to achieve preponderance over the sea. As a consequence, to Mahan, a country like Great Britain could become the largest empire of the world (Mahan 1890).

Happenings in the Indo-Pacific can better be appreciated with reference to the ideas of 20th century American geopolitical thinker, Nicholas J Spykman. In Spykman's view, "size means potential strength". According to him, western technology and a will to power, along with size would lead to actual strength. Writing in 1938, he held that 50 years from then "the quadrumvirate of world powers will be China, India, the United States, and the U.S.S.R (now Russia) (Spykman 1939: 39). In Spykman's understanding

> "the geographic area of the state is the territorial base from which it operates in time of war and the strategic position which it occupies during the temporary armistice called peace. It is the most fundamentally conditioning factor in the formulation of national policy because it is the most permanent. Because the geographic characteristics of states are relatively unchanging and unchangeable, the geographic demands of those states will remain the same for centuries, and because the world has

not yet reached that happy state where the wants of no man conflict with those of another, those demands will cause friction. Thus at the door of geography may be laid the blame for many of the age-long struggles which run persistently through history while governments and dynasties rise and fall." (Spykman 1938: 29).

However, more significant is his understanding of the Rimland, and this could be significant to understand the case of OBOR. Spykman accepted Mackinder's geographical concept of the "Heartland." However, for Spykman, crucial region of world politics is the coastal region bordering the "Heartland", which Mackinder had called as "inner or marginal crescent." Spykman, in the book *The Geography of the Peace*, which was published posthumously, renamed the inner crescent as the "Rimland." Spykman described Rimaland as follows:

> "The rimland of the Eurasian land mass must be viewed as an intermediate region, situated…between the heartland and the marginal seas. It functions as a vast buffer zone of conflict between sea power and land power. Looking in both directions, it must function amphibiously and defend itself on land and sea."[5] (Spykman 1944)

Rimland includes countries of Western Europe, the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and East Asia, including China. These countries, according to Spykman, combined with the offshore islands of Britain and Japan, possessed greater industrial and manpower resources than the Heartland. The Rimland also is composed of both the land and the sea power. In his understanding "Who controls the rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world."[6]

Coming to the Indo-Pacific, China's position can be seen in the context of regional economic differentiation with the emergence two entirely different systems of political economy (Kennedy 1993) in China, on the one hand, and its Continental-Maritime split personality (Cohen 2008), on the other. The former includes the inward oriented state-owned enterprises and centralised controls, and the outward-oriented capitalism (Kennedy, 1993: 176). The Continental orientation pushes China to become inwardly oriented, and the forces of Maritimity make the areas under its influence to be outwardly in orientation. This is revealed in the Continental-Maritime split personality of China. China has retained its repressive

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[5] Spykman, Nicholas J. (1944): *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company), p 44. Cited in Sempa, Francis P., Spykman's World, viewed on 20 Jun 2016 (http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2006/0406/semp/sempa_spykman.html).

[6] Spykman, Nicholas J. (1944): *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company), p 43. Cited in Sempa, Francis P., Ibid.

bureaucratic apparatus, but has also encouraged a market oriented economy (Cohen 2008: 254).

While China continues to remain a significant player in the region, rise of India is another dimension that needs to be factored into. India and other regional powers, including US and Japan have intensely debated the likely prospects of 'assertion' of China through its behaviour, including the OBOR project. The significant aspect is to understand China's intentions, which remains ambivalent. What complicates the matter is the history of India-China relations. China's political actions in Asia are often considered aggressive by other nations in the region.

China is involved in territorial disputes with the countries in the neighbourhood. The dispute with Russia has eased, but the former USSR and China were involved in a dispute over territory of over 4500 miles. China's boundary disputes with India are considered to be significant. China, following its aggression against India in 1962, has not vacated part of Indian territories that it had occupied during the war. In addition, China's support to Pakistan is considered to be part of its larger strategic policy against India. China also has land border disputes with Vietnam. China's maritime boundary disputes with Indonesia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and the Philippines over the Spratlys islands in the South China Sea, and dispute over Senkaku island with Japan are but a few more to be mentioned in this respect.[7] In addition, China has been in controversy over the issue of Taiwan and Tibet in the region.

India's maritime connections with the outside world for trade and commerce have been very old. The use of Navy for military purposes can also be traced to the ancient period. History has recorded the evidence of use of Navy by the Tamils against Ceylon in 2nd Century BC.[8] Later period of the ancient Indian history has also seen contacts with western Asia and Burma and use of ports for political and commerce purposes.[9] Mention can be made here of the Southern kingdoms of Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. Later history has also shown that missionaries, traders and colonisers, all took the sea route to come to India.

[7] S B Cohen, Ibid, pp 277-278.
[8] Romila Thapar, A History of India, Vol. 1, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1975, p. 104.
[9] RomilaThapar, A History of India, pp 106-108.

Coming to the contemporary period, when one looks at India's maritime connections and related foreign policy issues, the first link is the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean, stretching from the Cape of Good Hope to the Strait of Malacca is the world's link between the East and the West. It has vital sea lanes of communication, especially those along the strategic choke points in the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. This is known that 90 per cent of global commerce travels by sea. Of this, half the world's container traffic and 70 per cent of the total traffic of petroleum products is accounted for by the Indian Ocean. The Indian coasts are strategically located on the world's shipping routes. Approximately 80 per cent of the world's sea-borne oil trade passes through the choke points of this ocean.[10] In addition, country's foreign policy has, since 1991, also been looking east that aims at better economic ties, among others, with the countries located at East and Southeast of India. While alternative routes of transport are being considered, the maritime route would continue to remain predominant in trade and commerce with Southeast and East Asian nations. In addition, Indian coasts matter in the national security environment beyond the conventional threats of state aggression from adversarial states through the sea routes.

India's Maritime Doctrine 2004 declares the Arc from Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca as India's legitimate area of interest. In view of the above, this is pertinent to look at the Maritime Military Strategy of the Indian Navy. According to the Indian Navy:

> "(T)he main business of major navies in the 21st Century is to use warships to support foreign policy by less violent methods. During the long years of peace, we need to project power and show presence; catalyse partnerships; build trust and create interoperability through combined operations, and international maritime assistance. The range of options available extends from unilateral armed action, or coercion, at one end of the spectrum of naval diplomacy to bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation at the other end."[11]

India's engagements with the littoral countries have been meaningful and India has stretched out to the countries in the Indian Ocean and to the countries on her east with a positive approach. The smaller countries like the Maldives, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, the Seychelles and Mauritius have been comfortable in dealing with India. There is no denying the fact that

[10] Sarabjeet Singh Parmar, "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean: A changing Kaleidoscope", *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol 7. No. 4, Oct-Dec 2013, p.12.
[11] "Freedom to use the sea: India's Maritime Military Strategy", Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 2007, P. 83.

there have been occasional issues like those of the fishermen with countries like Sri Lanka, but overall, India has also proved to be a useful partner for these countries in safeguarding their sovereignty and territorial integrity. The South East Asian countries and Japan too find it convenient to deal with India. Unlike China, these countries do not have any territorial issues with India, and countries like Singapore, in fact, welcome greater role for India in the region. In addition, regional naval powers like the US too are positive about India's capability to become a net security provider in the region. Port calls to various navies in the region, and annual naval exercises including those with the US Navy are indicative of this fact.

While significant is the aspect of cooperation, on the one hand, a section of scholars have emphasised that what needs to be understood first is conflict/war and the factors related to the latter. The primary place in the debate has been given to the kind of conflicts that occur between the nation-states. Since the inception of the modern nation-state system, war primarily needs to be understood in terms of, what Clausewitz underlined, its interrelationship with politics. Clausewitzian definition puts it very clearly that "war is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our wills" (Clausewitz, 1989: 75) and it is an extension of policy by other means. Clausewitz's idea is considered a masterpiece and is read and taught, without fail, in my understanding in courses which deal with war, conflict, military strategy, peace studies and conflict resolution. In the last two, to reiterate, because we need to understand war and conflict first, if we have to achieve success in attaining peace or resolve conflict. Similar place of reverence has been accorded also to Sun Tzu's *Art of War*.

While there is no denying the fact that the two works contain significant knowledge on the subject and may help understand the motives and other material causes for war and conflict and war strategies, but I wish to highlight that Kautalya was much ahead in time and in terms of his understanding of the relationship between politics and war and the strategies to deal with wars. He also articulated the conditions, very clearly, when the states can expect to remain at peace with each other, when a state may initiate war against the other state and which state is likely to choose peace or alliance. For my purpose, I have focused on, as mentioned above, the two chapters, VI and VII to highlight these points. I have used the English translation by Dr. R Shamshashtri and the Samskrit version, compiled and edited by Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapthi Sastri.

Before going into the literature of Arthashashtra, it would pertinent to highlight the major theories in the field, which dominate the discipline. Following Jack S. Levy, I take some of them as follows. The first one is what Levy calls as System-level theories (Levy, 2011: 14) which has been dominated by 'realists'. Due to the uncertainties in the international system composed of unregulated nation-states, pursuit of power becomes the prime means/end and wars between the nation states can be deliberate and inadvertent, both. What the nation-states can hope to achieve is some form of balance of power where the international system can be expected to be bipolar or multipolar, among others. The theorists debated which one of these would be more stable, and hence, would lower the chance of occurrences of wars. People like Hans Morganthau and Kenneth Waltz have argued in favour of a bi-polar system and Karl Deutsch and David Singer in favour of a multipolar system in this regard (Waltz, 1964; Morganthau, 1948; Deutsch and Singer, 1964). However, what the international system can hope to achieve is a temporary condition where conflict or conflicts may be absent.

The dyadic-level theories have focused on issues that may involve disputes between the states over territories, and this may be a factor more dominant that other issues. Other factors that could be more important to explain why states may decide to for war despite an understanding that war is an insufficient means to resolve the conflict of interests include "private information and incentives to misrepresent that information, commitment problems and indivisible issues" (Levy, 2011: 20). The state-level theories, of which the democratic peace theory is the most popular would contend that democracies do not fight with each other. Although realists like Kenneth Waltz have contended that the democratic peace theory is untenable (Waltz, 2001), the advocates of the theory like Michael W. Doyle would argue that "constitutional, international and cosmopolitan sources" together can connect "the characteristics of liberal polities and economies with sustained liberal peace" (Doyle, 2005: 463). On the other hand, the individual-level theories pay attention to "the belief systems of key decision makers, the psychological processes through which they acquire information and make decisions, and their personalities and emotional states" (Levy, 2011: 27).

The theories mentioned above study and analyse peace and conflict in terms of the relationship of one with the other. However, the efforts made by peace researchers, Galtung being the most prominent personality among them, are to understand 'peace' as something which "in itself be peace productive, producing a common basis, a feeling of community in purpose that may pave the ground for deeper ties later on" (Galtung, 1969: 167). However,

Galtung, too, regards, among others, absence of violence as a condition of peace. According to Galtung, "violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations." This is a complex definition, which Galtung himself accepts that it is. Galtung also makes distinctions between physical and psychological violence, negative and positive approach to *influence*, if there is an object that is hurt, if there is a subject that acts, unintended and unintended violence and latent and manifest violence. To address the issue of peace, the violence needs to be understood and explained in all these dimensions.

The scholarship in the discipline, if one may think of summarising, has focused on psychological and other physical factors that can help explain conflicts/wars or establish causal relationship between conflicts/wars and those psychological or physical factors. In addition, the attempt has also been made to define conflict/war depending on the context and the role of individual or group level actors. The discipline has also endeavoured to contribute in broadening the understanding of the causes of the conflict and at what level the causes of conflicts/wars can be addressed to make the society peaceful. As has been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, scholars have made attempts to approach the subject matter of peace itself in a different manner to emphasise how peace should be positive and not negative. However, a cursory glance at the global political developments would indicate that not only military expenditure has continued to increase, but more the country is developed/developing, more is the tendency to expend on military. SIPRI military expenditure database can be referred to for this purpose. The top developed/developing countries who also top as countries in military spending include the United States, India, Germany, France, China and United Kingdom.[12] In addition, the number of conflicts and people who are falling prey to those conflicts has not stopped, but in many cases and geo-locations it is increasing. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, more than 100,000 people were killed in organised violence during the year 2014, "which is the highest fatality count in the twenty years".[13] These assessments, valuable contributions though in the field of peace studies and conflict resolution, indicate that the world continues to face conflicts and resultant casualties

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[12] See "The 15 countries with the highest military expenditure in 2015", at http://www.sipri.org/googlemaps/milex_top_15_2015_exp_map.html, accessed on 30 May 2016.

[13] See, Erik Melander, *Organsied Violence in the World 2015: An Assessment by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme*, available at http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/61/61335_1brochure2.pdf, accessed on 31 May 2016.

occurring out of those conflicts. It also needs underlining that the data as mentioned above relate only to 'organised violence'!

Reflections of Contemporary Geopolitical Structures in Kautalyan Arthashashtra

As mentioned above, Kutalya's Arthashashtra provides an immense and enriching understanding on the factors that contribute to intra-state and inter-state conflict and peace. Kautalya understood the psychological and physical factors, which can lead to internal disturbances in a state. In addition, he also explained the conditions under which states would be inclined more to maintain peace than conduct war against each-other. Discussing the elements that would be required to enhance the relative capability of a state in comparison to other states, he also underlined that, depending on the relative capabilities, which among the states would most likely wage war, negotiate peace or enter into alliance. It needs underlining that Kautalya does not understand peace as something which would exist in its own right. In other words, peace is a condition that is dependent on other conditions to be fulfilled. The latter may range from the individual qualities of the ruler to the capabilities of the council of ministers that the King has employed, resources that the state may have, quality of the people who live in the state, state's relationship with other states and the internal conditions of an enemy state, among others. Interesting is the fact that at the root of inter-state politics, for Kautalya, it is the spatial arrangement of the nations that would influence their relations the most.

Kautalya' theory of concentric circles is well known, researched, discussed and analysed in the field of political science. However, I wish to underline that the idea of peace and conflict is also inherent in this theory and Kautalya in many ways anticipated what the realists understood as conditions where conflict may be absent much later in the 20th century. Also, the idea in the dyadic level theories that "most wars are between contiguous states" and "territorial disputes are far more likely to escalate to war" can also be found in Kautalya's Arthashashtra. For one, his ideas of concentric circles offer a kind of spatial arrangement between the states and the nature of relationship one state may have with the other. This would also be indicative of the condition if the states would be at peace with each other or are likely to have a relationship of conflict.

To understand this, it is good to look at how Kautalya himself defines first what he calls विजिगीषुः (*Vijigishu*), who is at the centre of his theory of concentric circles of states and the territorial arrangement that would exist between the *Vijigishu* and other states.

राजा आत्मद्रव्यप्रकृतिसम्पन्नो नयस्याधिष्ठानं विजिगीषुः। (Kautalya, 1924: 231)

Meaning, *Vijigishu* is the king who possesses good character and best-fitted elements of sovereignty. He is also the source of policy. Before going into the details of the spatial arrangements, Kautalya in the Chapter I of Book VI gives details of what qualities a king should have, what kind of territory the state should have and the resources and the like (Kautalya, 1919: 361-364). The details are akin to what we endeavour to study and research today as part of psychological and physical factors that are required to understand war/conflicts or the conditions of peace. Now, Kautalya also explains how the spatial arrangements itself could be indicative of the relationship between and among the states.

तस्य समन्ततो मण्डलीभूता भूम्यनन्तरा अरिप्रकृतिः।

तथैव भूम्येकान्तरा मित्रप्रकृतिः। (Kautalya, 1924: 231)

What Kautalya is referring to is that the relationship between the states, which share boundaries are likely to be inimical in nature, while the king situated close to the enemy, but separated from the *Vijigishu* is likely be of friendly nature. Following this, Kautalya explains the spatial arrangement and nature of relationship that may exist between the states out of this spatial arrangement. Seen graphically it, would look like something as follows.[14] However, stated simply, the basic idea that runs throughout in Kautalya's theory of concentric circles is that territory could be the most important of all the issues that involves two states and hence, the states situated at the periphery of each other are unlikely to be friends, and hence at peace. However, some form of balance can be hoped to exist among the states where, friend's friend is unlikely to be an enemy and enemy's friend is unlikely to be a friend. Hence, from the point of view of geopolitics, zones of conflict and zones of peace can be geo-located.

Figure I

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[14] मित्र (Mitra) = Friend; विजिगीषुः (Vijigishu)= Conqueror or the King; अरि (Ari)= Enemy; शत्रुः (Shatruh)=Enemy; अरिमित्र (Ari Mitra)= Enemy's Friend; मित्रमित्र (Mitra Mitra)= Friend's Friend; मध्यमः (Madhyamah)=Mediatory King; पार्ष्णिग्रह (Parshnigraha)=rearward enemy; पार्ष्णिग्रहासार (Parshnigrahasaar)=ally of the rearward enemy; आक्रान्दः (Aakrandah)=rearward friend; आक्रन्दासार akrandasara)=ally of the rearward friend; उदासीनः (udasinah)=neutral king.

Graphical Representation of Kautalya's Views of States' Spatial Arrangements
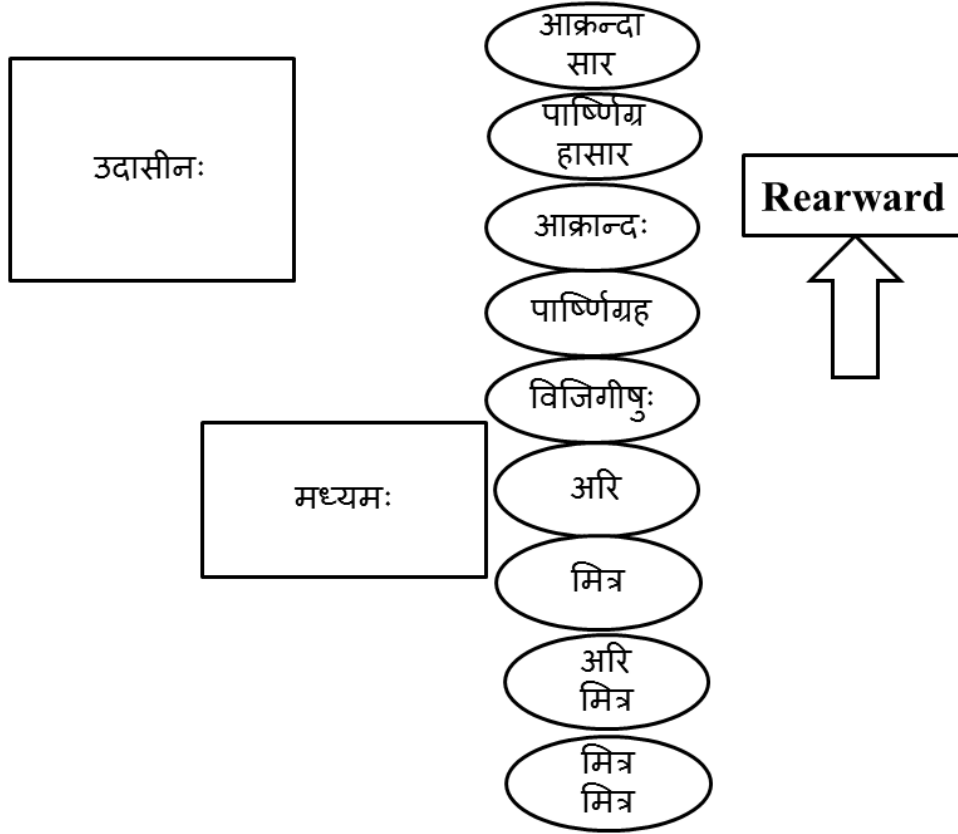
Status of a state or kingdom[15] and its likely relationship with other states and the resultant condition of peace and conflict/war would also depend on what Kautalya says causes, which may be human or providential. What is human is anticipated and what is providential is unforeseen (Kautalya, 1924: 230). Related to this is his concept of policy, which is expected to give the desired result. As stated above, the *Vijigishu* is fountain head of policy. Hence, the king who can run the affairs of his state according to policy is likely to govern under peaceful conditions. However, property and security (of property) are two important aspects that need to be paid attention to. Kautalya would state that what is acquired needs to be protected. Property and security, both depend on peace and industry (Kautalya, 1924: 365). Various conditions which may be marked by conditions of conflict or peace depends on the six-fold policy. Kautalya has explained this relationship as follows:

शमव्यायामौ योगक्षेमयोर्योनिः।

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[15] The territorial identity of the states could be referred to as kingdoms during the ancient Indian times. However, in this paper, states and kingdom has been used interchangeably.

कर्मारम्भाणां योगाराधनो व्यायामः।

कर्मफलोपभोगानां क्षेमाराधनः शमः।

शमव्यायामयोर्योनिः षाड्गुण्यम्।(Kautalya, 1924: 230)

What is done to achieve something is industry (*vyayama*) and undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of *vyayama* is peace. Stated differently, people should be able to engage in various meaningful activities and peace is a condition for the enjoyment of the outcome of this industry. However, Kautalya would make industry and peace, both dependent on what he says is the six-fold policy.

तत्र प्रणबन्धः संधिः, अपकारोविग्रहः, उपेक्षणमासनम् अभ्युच्चयोयानं परार्पणं संश्रयः,

सन्धिविग्रहोपादानंद्वेधीभाव इति षड्गुणाः। (Kautalya, 1924:237-238)

Kautalya in Chapter I of Book VII describes the six forms of state policy, which include peace (Sandhih or संधिः), war (Vigraha or विग्रहः), neutrality (Aasana or आसन), marching (yana or यान), alliance (Samshrayah or संश्रयः) and making peace with one and war with another (*Dwaidibhava* or द्वेधीभाव). Depending on the context and the king's assessment of the internal and external conditions and the relative capabilities of the states, a king can choose his policy from among the six, including that of waging the war or concluding peace. Kautalya equates peace with agreement with pledges and calls offensive operation as war. Further, indifference is neutrality and making preparations (for war) is marching. Seeking protection of another is alliance, in addition to *Dwaidibhava* (Kautalya, 1919: 370).

According to Kautalya, the conditions under which the six policies can be followed are as follows:

परस्माध्दीयमानः संद् धीत। अभ्युच्चीमानोविगृहीयात्। न मां परो नाहं परमु पहन्तुं शक्त्ः

इत्यासीत। गुणातिशययुक्तो यायात्। शक्तिहीनः संश्रयेत। सहाय साध्ये कार्ये द्वैधीभाव गच्छेत।

(Kautalya, 1924, 238)

Meaning, inferior state would make peace, superior in power shall wage war, a king confident of his capability would observe the policy of neutrality, the policy of marching would involve kings who possess the necessary means (marching would possibly mean show

of strength and not an actual offensive action), a state lacking in necessary capability itself but thinks that defence would be required would follow the policy of alliance and the king/state, which thinks that the dual policy of making peace with one and at the same time waging war with another would be in its interest would follow the policy of *Dwaidibhava*. Kutalya has given various details under which all these policies can be followed depending on a state's given and growing or decaying capabilities in relation to the given and growing or decaying capabilities of the enemy state and the nature of population in a given state. And, Kautalya too talks about what possibly could be understood as military, economic and ideational powers of a state. In his words,

शक्तिस्त्रिविद्याः (ज्ञानबलं मन्त्र शक्तिः, कोषदण्डबलः प्रभु शक्तिः, बिक्रमबलमुत्साहशक्तिः।)

(Kautalya, 1924: 234)

Now, the details of the conditions, which Kautalya has explained in detail in the Book VII of Arthashashtra possibly requires a separate paper, but the core of the argument that one can highlight as the objective of a state has been very aptly put by Kautalya in the following sentence:

बलं शक्तिः, सुखं सीद्धिः।(Kautalya, 1924: 234)

This means that for a state, strength is power and end is happiness. Kautalya further explains that since possession of power and happiness becomes a benchmark for a state to find its place among the peers, each state would endeavour to enhance its own power and elevate its happiness (Kautalya, 1919: 368). This some way conceptualises the contemporary realist thinking as regards the behaviour of the state in the international system.

Conclusion:

The endeavour in the preceding sentences has been made, in a very brief manner, to provide a glimpse of the ideas in Kautalya's Arthashashtra, which would benefit the contemporary discipline of geopolitics. This, at best, could be an outline of the ideas, as whole of the Arthashashtra is about how state and the people who live in the state can be prosperous and happy. However, conflict and rivalry is something that is also considered to be given and to guard against any conspiracy or treachery against it, the state needs to be powerful. The more powerful a state is, happier and more peaceful it is. This does not mean that Kautalya does not throw light on cooperation between the states. The very idea of *mitra* (friend) and *ari* (enemy) is something which conceptualises the ideas of cooperation and conflict in the international politics.

In conclusion, I intend to underline that emerging geopolitical construct in the Indo-Pacific cannot be seen in terms of the replication of Kautalya's ideas. Also, this is never my intention to suggest that it is ever possible. What, I intend highlighting, however, is the fact that the significance of geography to the inter-state relations, and the internal and external factors that Kautalya has enumerated in his Arthashashtra can be a significant guide to understand the emerging geopolitics of the contemporary Indo-Pacific.

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