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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**Evolving Indian Strategic Thinking: Implications for Pakistan Security****Mr. Tauqeer Ahmed**

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Email: masood.rehman@iiu.edu.pk**Abstract**

The Indian strategic thinking is continuously transforming and creating security challenges for Pakistan. This article aims to highlight the impact of Chanakya Kautilya's six-fold policy on the doctrinal maneuvering of the Indian military and its impact on Pakistan's security. Kautilya being a realist was proponent of aggressive strategic thinking. His work is still relevant in the modern strategic thought. There is reflection of his six-fold policy and mandala theory on the current Indian strategic thinking. Which not only impacts the Indian military's doctrinal shift from defensive to offensive war strategies, CSD/proactive military Ops, surgical strikes or New Limited Land Warfare Doctrine of 2018, but it is also relevant to the undeclared war or hybrid warfare domains. It is imperative for Pakistan to closely monitor the transformation in the Indian strategic thinking to come up with adequate response to mitigate emerging challenges in the shape of limited war strategies, military modernization or hybrid warfare.

Keyword: Chanakya Kautilya, Strategic Stability, Indo-US Alliance, Doctrinal Transformation, Indian Military Modernization

Introduction

The Indian strategic thinking in the modern times is offensive and hawkish towards Pakistan. It rejuvenates the work of classical realist thinker Chanakya Kautilya. Though his work is centuries old but it still reflects in the modern strategic thinking of India. This article focusses on the Chanakya's Kautilya's masterpiece *Arthashastra* with special emphasis on his six-fold policy of statecraft and its application on the current strategic culture in India. Pakistan after its independence inherited hostile neighborhood which created serious challenges for its survival. Both states fought three wars and a small scale conflict at Kargil in 1999.¹ Still there are many unresolved issues which makes this region the most dangerous place on earth because of the nuclear factor and consistent doctrinal maneuvering by the Indian military.

The nuclear factor and hardcore strategic competition between the two potentially invite theoretical approaches envisioning the classical concepts of power politics. Though, the concept itself has philosophical endeavors that creates challenges for both India and Pakistan to classify the traditional connotations of power politics mainly because of their regional conflictual approach.

¹ Tripathi, Deepak. *The Impact of Wars on World Politics, 1775–2023: Hope and Despair*. Germany: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024, 69

Therefore, the available theoretical literature which explains the broader and narrow aspects of power politics highlights the application of classical realism along with security dilemma, and stability instability paradox. The realist school of thought predominantly holds an important place in the historical as well as in the modern hemispheres of power politics. The topic under investigation has its limitations when it comes to involve the greater explanations of realistic phenomenon. The literature identifies both classical and neo-realistic approaches to deal with the concept of power between traditional and modern states. Scholars that has been given weightage and recognized as the pioneers of the realist school of thought can be classified as Kenneth Waltz, Hobbs and Machiavelli. Though, the Indian approach to the school of realism is little different than the explanations of power by the above-mentioned scholars. Both traditional and modern outlook of the Indian power politics gets its strength from its own strategic thinker, Chanakya Kauṭilya.² He was also regarded as Brahman Kauṭilya- (Chanakya-Vishnugupta). It is believed that he played an important role in the debacle of Nanda dynasty and established the Kingdom of Chandragupta Maurya in 321 B.C. He wrote a book *Arthashastra*, which is a detailed work of statecraft, military strategy and diplomacy. The *Arthashastra* is divided into fifteen books. Ten out of fifteen are devoted to diplomacy and war (Chaliand 1994). This is the reason that the study under evaluation has considered this masterpiece to understand the historical significance of *Arthashastra* and its relevance with the Indian strategic thinking in the modern times. Chandragupta's rule in the Indian subcontinent and beyond was possible because of Kautilya's advice and mentorship. The *Arthashastra* is full of valuable strategies for statecraft, diplomacy and war. It talks about fortified military camp to avoid any sabotage or attack during campaign. It also discusses the value of a route march for army through the villages and forests for adequate logistics and supplies.³ The *Arthashastra* put emphasis on the use of elephants and chariots in the war. The elephants played an important role in breaking up formations of the enemy, crushing the soldiers and flattening the enemy campsite.⁴ The modern application of *Arthashastra* is no different. The importance of logistics and supplies plays great role even today. The Main Battle Tanks-(MBTs) and Armored Personnel Carriers-(APCs) have replaced elephants and horses in the modern warfare. The Indian military is also emphasizing on modern MBTs to maintain dominance in the plains and desert areas in the vicinity of Pakistan. This is the reason that India has ordered hundreds of modern Russian T-90 MBTs to operationalize its quick and warfare doctrines.⁵ Chanakya Kauṭilya is regarded as the classical realist in the literature of strategic studies. He was an Indian military strategist and advisor of the King Chandragupta Maurya (324 – 297 BCE) who established the biggest ever Hindu empire in subcontinent.⁶ It was Chanakya Kauṭilya who orchestrated the victories of Mauryan Empire against the Greeks and Nanda Empire. The Mauryan Army had 600,000 infantry men, 50,000 cavalry- (horsemen), 10,000 elephants, and 7000 chariots (Showick Thorpe and Edgar Thorpe 2009). It seems that Chanakya Kauṭilya advised his king to build huge military machine to conquer and deter other Kingdoms. Same approach is found in the modern Indian strategic thinkers. The massive military modernization and aggressive doctrines depict the influence of *Arthashastra* on modern Indian strategic thinking.

² Sharma, Urmila., Sharma, Sanjeev Kumar. Indian Political Thought. India: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001, 54.

³ Kauṭilya. The *Arthashastra*. India: Penguin Books India, 1992, 536.

⁴ Barua, Pradeep. The state at war in South Asia. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005, 14.

⁵ Dr. Virendra Singh Baghel, *Modi's Vision 2030*. India: Readers Paradise, 2020, 265.

⁶ Dr. Lalith Kumar Dharavath, *Thinking and Thinkers of Police Administration*. India.: Chyren Publication, 2025, 144.

Chanakya Kautilya's central point in *Arthashastra* revolve around two main things, first the *Mandala Theory*,⁷ and second the *Six-fold policy*.⁸ The Mandala theory says that neighboring states should be treated as enemies and states beyond the neighboring states as friends. This theory of Chanakya Kautilya fits into the modern strategic thinking of India. It has cultivated good strategic and economic ties with Iran and Afghanistan, however having hostile policies towards its immediate neighbors like Pakistan and China. The next part of the study would explain in details the Kautilyan approach in dealing with other states and its relevance with the modern Indian strategic approach in the region towards Pakistan. In his six-fold policy Chanakya Kautilya focused on six main points:

- I. **Sandhi-** (Treaty of Peace)
- II. **Vigrha -** (War)
- III. **Asana-** (Neutrality)
- IV. **Yana-** (Preparation for war/Marching)
- V. **Samsharaya-** (Alliance with greater kings)
- VI. **Dvadbhava-** (Double Policy).⁹

If we analyze the same strategy with the modern strategic thinking of India, we may conclude that this is the true reflection of Kautilyan six-fold policy. Though, as part of theoretical framework the relevant parts of Kautilyan theory will be discussed.

Vigrha - (War)

The second point of six-fold policy is **War**, which is relevant to this study. By war Kautilya means that, "When a king is in a superior position compared to his enemy, he will attack and wage war."¹⁰ To explain this concept Kautilya mentioned three types of war in his book.

First is **Open War**, which is a declared total war against an enemy, in which whole military machine, air force, army, navy, and intelligence and grand strategy is involved.¹¹ The application of this strategy can be seen during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars, respectively.¹² The clear manifestation of the '**Open War**' strategy by India during the 1971 Indo-Pak war suggest its execution through the application of '**Undeclared War**' strategy. In other words, India initiated the war in East Pakistan- (Now Bangladesh) through undeclared war strategy by raising Mukti Bahini insurgent group¹³ and after successful execution of it; New Delhi transferred the military strategy from undeclared to Open War strategy and attacked East Pakistan with its regular

⁷ Kamal Kumar and Nirmal Jindal, *Decolonising International Relations: Perspectives from the Global South*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2025, 65.

⁸ Shama Sastri and Rudrapatna. *Kautilya's Arthashastra*. India: Printed at the Government Press, 1915, 327.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Dr. Mandavi Choudhary et al, *The Role of Humanities in Understanding Society: A Broad Perspective*. India: Chyren Publication, 2025, 226.

¹¹ Abhijeet Sarkar, *Three-Front Warfare in Modern India: Modernizing Chanakya's Warcraft for India's Tri-Front Doctrine*. United Kingdom: Abhijeet Sarkar, 2025, 224.

¹² Frank Ledwidge, *Aerial Warfare: A Very Short Introduction*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2020, 92

¹³ Rammohun, E M., Rammohan, *Countering Insurgencies in India: An Insider's View*. India: Vij Books India Private Limited, 2011, 164

military.¹⁴ That the classical example of hybrid warfare, in which the Indians launched conventional and covert operations to dismember Pakistan.

The Second concept is a **Secret War**, a sudden attack, terrorizing from one side and attack from another side.¹⁵ Now this concept is also relevant with the Indian Army's Cold Start Doctrine, which aims at quick and swift multiple thrusts into Pakistan, which may include surgical strikes, use of Special Forces, making it difficult for Pakistan Army to engage Indian assault on multiple fronts. India is effectively pursuing this strategy and working hard to operationalize this doctrine against Pakistan. In addition, the Indian air force introduced strategy of sub-conventional warfare in 2012 which aims at quick and swift operations against suspected militants across the LoC.¹⁶ To achieve this target, the IAF would require highly sophisticated aircraft with modern avionics and lethal firepower to maintain air superiority and to provide close air support to its ground forces for any specialized joint quick and intense military operations. The Indian military would also need long range air defense capabilities to counter any attack by Pakistani Aircraft F-16s or JF-Thunders, ballistic, cruise missiles or armed UAVs. To fill this gap the Indian military has inked mega defense deals with Israel and Russia for the induction of Barak-8 and S-400 Long range highly advanced air defense systems.¹⁷ All these developments in doctrine and military modernization suggests that the Indian military is planning to fight a short but intense conflict with Pakistan. These attacks would be under the recently published *Joint Indian armed forces doctrine of 2017*. In which the Indian government has envisaged that the Indian military resort the right to carry out surgical strikes or sub-conventional operations in case of any alleged terrorist incident.¹⁸ The Indian military is working on the second approach of Chanakya Kautilya's *Secret war* strategy, which involves quick and swift operations to get element of surprise against enemy.

In 2018 the Indian Army introduced its New Land Warfare Doctrine which accentuates the need for an agile, well equipped, trained force to conduct limited but intense operations against Pakistan.¹⁹ India is continuously carrying out doctrinal transformation to find the gap between conventional and nuclear capabilities of Pakistan and execute its limited war strategy, without realizing the fact that it would seriously hamper the peace and security of South Asia. In 2019, after Pulwama incident the Indian Air force breached the Pakistani air space, dropped a payload nearby and initiated a false campaign through media that they have conducted successful surgical strike inside Pakistani territory and killed many alleged militants.²⁰ However, the next day Pakistan Air Force responded with sheer professionalism and not only evaded the Indian air defenses but also dropped H-Weapons close to its key military installations. This was the message

¹⁴ Gay Morris and Jens Richard Giersdorf, *Choreographies of 21st Century Wars*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2016, 185

¹⁵ Shama Sastri, Rudrapatna. Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. India: Printed at the Government Press, 1915, 393

¹⁶ Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: A Critical Analysis" *IPRI Journal*, XX (1): 105-134. <https://ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DOI-Article-5-Abstract-IPRI-Journal-XX-I.pdf>, 109.

¹⁷ Surinder Mohan, *Complex Rivalry: The Dynamics of India-Pakistan Conflict*. United States: University of Michigan Press, 2022, 256.

¹⁸ Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit, "India Armed Forces Joint Doctrine 2017: A Critical Appraisal" IPRI, March 15, 2018. <https://ipripak.org/india-armed-forces-joint-doctrine-2017-a-critical-appraisal/>.

¹⁹ Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: A Critical Analysis" *IPRI Journal*, XX (1): 105-134.

²⁰ Rizwana Abbasi and Muhammad Saeed Uzzaman, *Changing Patterns of Warfare Between India and Pakistan: Navigating the Impact of New and Disruptive Technologies*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, (2023), 88

to the Indian side that any secret attack, surgical strike or air strike will invite strong response from Pakistan.²¹

In 2025, after a militant attack in Pahalgam, the Indian government without any evidence accused Pakistan and decided to carry out surgical strike. The Indian Air Force carried missile strikes against civilian targets across Pakistan. The Indian Air strike employed its latest weapons including Rafale Aircraft armed with SCALP, Hammer, Brahmos Missiles and advanced UAVs. Which resulted in few civilian casualties in Pakistan. In retaliation to the Indian unprovoked airstrikes on civilian targets, Pakistan launched Operation Bunyan-al-Marsus targeting key Indian military installations in Udhampur and Pathankot, as well as logistic centers and command hubs. Pakistan's counter surgical strikes destroyed BrahMos storage site, S-400 air defense system, six aircraft including recently inducted Rafale and maintained total dominance with cyber-attacks against India's Network Centric Warfare- (NCW) and Electronic Warfare- (EW) infrastructure.²² India's operation Sindhoor was actually continuation her previous policy of "punitive response" or Surgical strikes mentioned in Land Warfare Doctrine 2018.²³ The only difference was the level of preparation and engagement this time. This time India was well prepared with Rafale Aircraft, Air Launched Cruise Missiles- (ALCMs), NCW/EW assets and highly sophisticated long range Israeli armed UAVs.²⁴ This time India conducted deeper air strikes to create a new normal in the region. The idea was to use such air strikes for political mileage in elections. India miscalculated Pakistan's response. The Indian government might have envisioned Pakistan may not respond because of three things;

1. Political instability in Pakistan
2. Dwindling economy
3. Increasing threat of TTP/BLA/ISKP

But Pakistan's military's response was well calibrated, articulated with greater precision and accuracy. Indian government had no other option but to accept ceasefire brokered by the US President Donald Trump.²⁵ Pakistan in recent conflict with India reestablished its conventional deterrence. At least for the foreseeable future, Indian government may not try any other misadventure against Pakistan. That does not mean that they will never attack Pakistan again. Indian military will now fill the operational gaps, learn from their past mistakes and try a limited conventional war against Pakistan as envisaged in their Land Warfare Doctrine of 2018.²⁶

The Indian military's aggressive strategic thinking is evolving because Pakistan is coming up with adequate answers. Therefore, these types of military operations are risky and carry the seeds of instability and turmoil.

²¹ Bilal Khan, "Swift Retort: How Pakistan Adapted in the Last Six Years, *Quwa*, March 4, 2025. <https://quwa.org/pakistan-air-force-news/swift-retort-how-pakistan-adapted-in-the-last-six-years/>.

²² "Tri-Service Press Conference - 11 May 2025 | ISPR" ISPR Official/YouTube Channel, August 26, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQvsb4ouuI0&t=66s>.

²³ Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: A Critical Analysis" *IPRI Journal*; Winter 2020, XX (1): 105-134. search Institute. *IPRI Journal* v XX (1). <https://doi.org/10.31945/iprij.200105>, 123.

²⁴ R Anil Kumar, "BrahMos in Operation Sindhoor, *India Strategic*, May 12, 2025. <https://www.indiastrategic.in/brahmos-in-operation-sindoor/>.

²⁵ Matthew Chance, "The US takes credit for India-Pakistan ceasefire, but this Trump truce may not herald lasting peace" *CNN News*, May 10, 2025. <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/05/10/india/analysis-us-role-india-pakistan-ceasefire-latam-intl>

²⁶ Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: A Critical Analysis" *IPRI Journal*; Winter 2020, XX (1): 105-134. search Institute. *IPRI Journal* v XX (1). <https://doi.org/10.31945/iprij.200105>, 123.

Such quick operations against a nuclear weapon state would create uncertainty in the region and any response by Pakistan would seriously challenge the flimsy nuclear deterrence in the region.

Modern Application of Undeclared warfare: Hybrid warfare

The third category of war according to Chanakya Kauṭilya is **Undeclared War**. This entails the use of secret agents, religion or superstition, and women against the enemies.²⁷ India has already waged this type of war against Pakistan since the establishment of Research and Analysis Wing- (R&AW) in 1968.²⁸ The first job for R&AW was to create Mukti Bahini a terrorist Organization that played a crucial role in the dismemberment of Pakistan. Mukti Bahini was trained, funded and nurtured by the Indian military and their R&AW. They were involved in heinous crimes against Pakistan Army, their families, and loyal to Pakistan Biharis.²⁹ India has been actively carrying out subversive activities against Pakistan and many of their high-profile agents were captured in Pakistan since 1970s. Most notable were Surjeet Singh, Sarabjit Singh, Kashmir Singh, Ravinder Kaushak and recently held Kulbushan Yadav.³⁰ The Indian military follows undeclared war as an official policy. Former Chief of Army Staff General V.K Singh formed a special unit with the code name Technical Service Division- (TSD) in the Indian Army to carry out subversive activities in Pakistan, target Hafiz Saeed, Chief of Jamat-u-Dawa and buy the loyalties of Kashmiri leaders in Indian Held Kashmir- (IHK).³¹ The Undeclared war strategy has also been effectively operationalized in the recent past. India has been using the Afghan soil to flare-up insurgency in Balochistan and terrorism in tribal areas of Pakistan. The confession of former TTP leader Latif Mehsud exposed the Indian destabilizing activities inside Pakistan. He was arrested by the US forces in Afghanistan and later on handed over to Pakistan for further investigation.³² In his confession, he said that, Indian R&AW is using militant organization to create disturbance in Pakistani tribal areas and Balochistan.³³ Chanakya Kauṭilya in Arthashastra also emphasized on the use of spies for internal and external surveillance. Kauṭilya also suggested to use businessman or traders as secret agents for spying in other states.³⁴ The pertinent example in the modern times is the Indian Spy Kulbushan Yadav, who disguised himself in Iran and as a businessman for spying in Pakistan.³⁵ The arrest Kulbushan Yadav exposed the Indian covert activities in Pakistan. In his two confessions he exposed the notorious role of the Indian intelligence agencies in creating instability in Pakistan to disrupt China Pakistan Economic Corridor- (CPEC) mega project, destabilize the economic hub of Pakistan Karachi to interrupt economic growth of Pakistan, to carry out terrorist activities on large scale to create political instability and to use the Afghan soil for support, fund and train militants for terrorist activities inside Pakistan.³⁶ But India has denied all these

²⁷ Rohit Manglik, *Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: EduGorilla Publication, 2023, 138.

²⁸ Dr. Namrata Mishra Tiwari, *Pride of Independent India*. India: Nachiket Prakashan, 2024, 72.

²⁹ Fahmida Ashraf, *RAW: Covert Instrument of Indian Ambitions*. India: Institute of Strategic Studies, 2004, 27.

³⁰ Ali Osman, "From Sarabjit to Jadhav: A history of Indian spies in Pakistan" *Dawn*, April 10, 2017.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1326121>.

³¹ Josy Joseph, "Secret military intelligence unit ran 8 covert operations abroad?" *Times of India*, September 24, 2013.

<https://tinyurl.com/zpxbvr63>

³² "Pakistan Taliban chief Latif Mehsud repatriated" *BBC*, December 07, 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-30368500>

³³ "India is Burning Pakistan through TTP - Second in Command of TTP, Latif Ullah Mehsud speaks out" *YouTube*, January 29, 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-lMegDtHPw>

³⁴ Divyam Agarwal, *India Unveiled: Chronicles from Dawn to Independence*. India: Divyam Agarwal, 2025, 175.

³⁵ "Who is Kulbhushan Jadhav?" *Dawn.com*, April 10, 2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1326117>

³⁶ "Transcript of RAW agent Kulbhushan's confessional statement" *Dawn*, March 30, 2016.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1248786>

allegations. The Indian official narrative is that Kulbushan Yadav is an Indian national 'son of soil',³⁷ he was in Iran for business purposes, he was kidnapped by the Pakistani security forces, and he is long retired from service and has nothing to do with the government of India. But there are many unanswered questions which could be asked by the Indian government. First, why he was carrying fake passport? Why he was kidnaped from Iran, what makes him so special that other 4,000 Indians living in Iran were unscathed and he was kidnapped? The mystery around Kulbushan Yadav is growing because the Indian government is unable to answer these questions.³⁸ This is how intelligence games are played, if a spy is caught the government and relevant security agencies deny any association with him. The surrender and confession of former TTP spokesman Ehsan Ullah Ehsan – (real name Liaquat Ali) proved that India is funding, training and nurturing militant organizations in Afghanistan to create large scale subversion in Pakistan.³⁹ All these subversive activities by the Indian intelligence agencies created serious security challenges for Pakistan. The *undeclared war* strategy of India proven to be more successful than any direct attack by the Indian military under cold start doctrine or proactive military operations. Pakistan faced thousands of civil- military casualties and billions of dollars in financial terms. The other relevant approach from Kautilya's six-fold policy is **marching**, which is discussed in next paragraphs.

Yana- (Marching): Preparation for War/Military Modernization

Chanakya Kautilya represented true picture of statehood, military strategy and techniques to win over enemies. By Yana- (Marching) Kautilya meant making preparation for attack without actually declaring a war.⁴⁰ The relevance of the *marching* is with the modernization of the Indian military and operationalization of their offensive doctrines. The next part of the study would enlist the Indian military's modernization drive and its impact on the strategic stability of south Asia. India wants to become a great power keeping in mind its economic pace, population boom and military might. The Indian military is considered as the third largest force in the world and largest military in south Asia. The total size of the Indian military is close to 1,346,000. The Indian army is the largest branch of Indian military, with about 1,150,900 men whereas Indian Air force- (IAF) and its Navy stands at 127,200 and 58,350 respectively.⁴¹ India is aspirant of global power status but also wants to preserve balance of power with superior China and strategically compatible Pakistan. Since independence the Indian military's strategic thinking and military modernization has been focused on Pakistan. This is the reason that India is pouring billions of dollars to revamp its ageing military machine and fill the gaps in its overall war fighting capabilities. To achieve this goal, the Indian military has launched a massive transformation program. Over the period of time India has increased its defense budget to overcome operational gaps. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute- (SIPRI) report of 2024, India is the second largest importer of arms in the world after Ukraine. Major defense imports came from Russia (36%), France (33%) and Israel (13%).⁴² In addition, the defense budget for the fiscal year 2025-

³⁷ "Kulbhushan is our son, will go to any extent to save him: India" *The News*, April 12, 2017.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/198039-Kulbhushan-is-our-son-will-go-to-any-extent-to-save-him-India>

³⁸ Karan Thapar, "The mysterious Mr. Jadhav" *Indian Express*, April 21, 2017. <https://tinyurl.com/cx5hkurm>

³⁹ "Confessional statement of Ehsan Ullah Ehsan" *ISPR Official*, April 27, 2017.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nh5KndY7Jq0>.

⁴⁰ Bishnu Pathak and Bastola, Susmita. *The Arts of Eastern Philosophy*. United States: Lulu.com, 2023, 63.

⁴¹ Shivani Sharma, "Army facing shortage of over 1 lakh personnel amid border tensions: Government" *India Today*, April 14, 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/4a4rz7u2>

⁴² Mathew George et al, "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2024" *SIPRI*, March 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/2nhjhhs>.

26 also reached to \$78.7 billion.⁴³ India is in close strategic partnership with the US, Russia, France and Israel to improve its obsolescent military capabilities, induct force multipliers and fill the operational gaps in its overall war fighting capabilities. The Indian military's enormous modernization drive is considered as a threat to the national security of Pakistan and this issue needs an urgent attention and adequate conventional and non-conventional response. The Indian military modernization at rapid scale is a real and pertinent challenge to the deterrence stability of South Asia. The conventional balance of power in south Asia would dangerously tilt in the favor of India and seriously challenge the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan. Such a development would compel Pakistan to rely on its tactical nukes to deny any conventional or technological edge to India. Pakistan must keep nuclear weapons as last option and develop its conventional deterrence vis-à-vis India. Pakistan needs to overhaul its indigenous defense industry to enhance its potential to help its military to overcome operational gaps in its overall warfighting capabilities. Pakistan military needs to incorporate network centric and electronic warfare capabilities to meet challenges imposed by the modern warfare. It must focus on its surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, add new long range and long endurance UAVs, AWACS and other radars to maintain perpetual vigilance at the borders to deny element of surprise to the enemy forces without any time barrier in all weather conditions and terrain. These conventional capabilities of Pakistan would make the adventurism by India costly and least effective. In addition, Pakistan army must modernize its infantry, improve the battlefield command and control structure, equip MBTs with greater firepower, range and maneuverability. Pakistan military needs to identify its weak areas in its overall warfighting capabilities and to work on its operational preparedness to meet emerging threats from India at LoC and regular border. Pakistan must also enhance night vision capabilities in its military because future wars would be limited, intense, quick and swift without any time barrier. Pakistan military must be ready for prompt response to any misadventure by the Indian forces, for that matter Pakistan must also improve its human intelligence to know about enemy plans in advance and take countermeasures to prevent any surgical strikes or proactive military operations in future. It is imperative that both states must show restraint and resolve all outstanding issues amicably because, there will not be any winner in a nuclear war, as emphasized by George Wald in 1969 that, "there is nothing worth having that can be obtained by nuclear war - nothing material or ideological - no tradition that it can defend. It is utterly self-defeating".⁴⁴ It is necessary that India and Pakistan must learn from the past mistakes and deviate from costly arms race and spend that money on the human resource development of the millions of people starving in both countries.

Alliance- (Samsharaya)- Alliance with greater Kings

Since, its inception the Indian strategic thinking revolved around hegemonic designs in South Asia. In order to deter the Chinese and US strategic partnership with Pakistan, India cultivated good ties with the Russians. In 1970s, both states signed a friendship treaty which allowed India to create troubles in East Pakistan- (Now Bangladesh).⁴⁵ The Indian strategic thinkers applied the mandala theory on Pakistan and ultimately cut its

⁴³ Ariba Shahid and Asif Shahzad, "Pakistan boosts defence budget by 20% but slashes overall spending in 2025-26" *Reuters*, June 10, 2025. <https://tinyurl.com/3h3xh7eb>

⁴⁴ Norman Solomon, *Made Love, Got War: Close Encounters with America's Warfare State*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2024, 76.

⁴⁵ Jerome Conley, *Indo-Russian Military and Nuclear Cooperation: Lessons and Options for U.S. Policy in South Asia*. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001, 27.

Eastern wing with the application of hybrid war strategy.⁴⁶ The alliance with Soviet Union provided confidence and a kind of umbrella for its aggressive operations against Pakistan. In modern times India is in close strategic and defense collaborations with major powers like Russia, America, Israel and Europe. The Indian Army is emphasizing on the procurement of advance T-90S MK-III MBTs because this MBT will be the backbone of IBGs and other strike formations.⁴⁷ The induction of SU-30 MKI & Rafale Aircraft from Russians and French suppliers respectively would provide an air cover to the fast moving mechanized forces. Both these capabilities are essential for the execution of any quick limited war doctrines in the Indo-Pak context. India is also in close strategic alliance with the US to get modern weapon and equipment to execute its aggressive military doctrines against Pakistan. Another important thing for the operationalization of any quick operations would be the induction of highly advanced Apache and Chinook helicopters from the US (Gupta 2019). These helicopters would provide close aerial support to the ground forces and would be an essential element of IBGs in future. India's defense collaborations with Israel and Russia would help them to fill the operational gaps in their air defense capabilities. In that context, the Indian government has inked two major deals for the procurement of long range air defense systems, Russian S-400 and Israeli Barak-8 to safeguard its airspace against any counter strike by Pakistan's aircraft, missiles or UAVs in case of any preemptive strike by the IAF.⁴⁸ These air defense systems would also provide cover to the advancing mechanized forces for shallow thrusts against Pakistan. However, Air Marshal (retired) Muhammad Ashfaq Arain believe that,

*Pakistan's armed forces being cognizant of the effects of these inductions in the Indian Armed Forces are already working to offset the effects. Work on Fifth Generation aircraft is already underway, Ababeel (capable of delivering multiple nuclear warheads) is an answer to India's modern air defense systems.*⁴⁹

The Indian Army is also revamping its Artillery Guns because long range Artillery with greater firepower and range will play an important role in the execution of LWD-18. In that context, the Indian Army in November 2018 inducted American M777- Ultra Light and South Korean- K9 Vajra Howitzers to beef up their firepower at the border with Pakistan. The indigenous Artillery Guns Dhanush 1&2 with 35km range also beefed up India's artillery.⁵⁰ These capabilities would play a decisive role in any future limited war with Pakistan. The procurement of long range artillery guns would be a nightmare for Pakistani forces deployed at the International border, working boundary or LoC. In-line with the LWD-18 the Indian military is putting greater emphasis on the induction of Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance- (ISR) capabilities. The ISR capabilities are essential element for any quick, limited warfare doctrine by the Indian Army. The ISR capabilities are required to get the real time information about the enemy location, position, deployment and movement in peacetime and during warfare. The Indian military has made great strides in this field of Spy satellites, long range/endurance UAVs, Air borne Early Warning communication systems. The LWD-18 doctrine visualizes, that "Timely and assured ISR inputs, in concert with intelligence of other Services/agencies will be developed to offset any terrain and force asymmetries. Enhancing the Information Warfare

⁴⁶ V. K. Subramanian, *Maxims of Chanakya: Kautilya*. India: Abhinav Publications, 1980, 5.

⁴⁷ Kapil Kajal, "India rolls out T-90 Mk-III tanks" *Janes*, June 13, 2024.

⁴⁸ The International Institute for Strategic Studies. *The Military Balance 2023*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2023, 252.

⁴⁹ Arain, Air Marshal (retired) Muhammad Ashfaq, "Personal Conversation", Masood Ur Rehman, Islamabad, January 18, 2018.

⁵⁰ Dr. Virendra Singh Baghel, *Modi's Vision 2030*. India: Readers Paradise, 2020, 264.

and ISR capabilities will be critical for precise and decisive employment of long range vectors, strategic and other non-contact assets to cause maximum degradation to the adversary".⁵¹ The Indian Space and Research Organization-(ISRO) launched a remote sensing satellite RISAT-2 in 2009.⁵² In 2013, ISRO launched GSAT-7 communication satellite for the Indian Navy to get maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean Region. In 2015, the ISRO came up with another military satellite GSAT-6 to fill the operational gaps in the ISR capabilities of the Indian Army and provide real time information about the enemy.⁵³ The GSAT-6 is matched with the Indian Army's new LWD-18. It would provide the Indian soldiers with real time information, uninterrupted communication with the central command in diverse terrain or harsh weather conditions without any heavy burden of carrying any communication equipment.⁵⁴ According to reports the GSAT-6 would boost the Indian Army's capabilities for swift and accurate strikes along with better real time view of the target and battlefield. This satellite would connect the Indian Army's strike formations for smooth concurrent information without any time constraint.⁵⁵

Another important induction by the Indian military is the GSAT-7A satellite, which is going to connect all ground-based radars, UAVs, airbases and AEW&CS, maintain air dominance, and collect intelligence by detecting aircraft, vessels and other vehicles in long range. The induction of GSAT-7A would revamp the Indian military's Network Centric & Electronic Warfare capabilities.⁵⁶ Apart from space assets the Indian Army is also using different types of ground based Radars and sensors for reconnaissance and surveillance at LoC or international border. Currently the Indian Army possess, short range Battle Field Surveillance Radars, Weapon Locating Radars, Long Range Reconnaissance and Observation System-(LORROS), Thermal Imaging Intensification Observation Equipment- (TIOE), N Cross night vision equipment, Hand Held Thermal Imaging- (HHTI) equipment, night vision binoculars and Unattended Ground Sensors.⁵⁷ In modern warfare these systems are highly sophisticated and crucial for the outcome of war. The Indian Army is very big and these systems are minimal. More time and resources are needed to equip most of the Indian soldiers with these capabilities. The Indian military's strategic thinking envision greater speed, maneuverability, nimbleness and integration in ground and air assets. The ISR capabilities would fill that gap and help the Indian forces with greater integration and battlefield transparency. These capabilities would be a grave threat for Pakistan in future warfare scenarios and needs an effective counter response to mitigate these emerging threats emanating from the ISR capabilities of the Indian Military. These allies are not only

⁵¹ "Land Warfare Doctrine 2018" ssri-j.com, December 18, 2018.

<https://www.ssri-j.com/MediaReport/Document/IndianArmyLandWarfareDoctrine2018.pdf>, 7.

⁵² Gurbir Singh, *The Indian Space Programme: India's incredible journey from the Third World towards the First*. United Kingdom: Astrotalkuk Publications, 2017, 87

⁵³ P. J. Blount and Saadia M. Pekkanen, *The Oxford Handbook of Space Security*. United States: Oxford University Press, 2024, 375.

⁵⁴ "GSAT-6: India's Second Military Satellite Launched", IDSA.in, August 31, 2015. <https://www.idsa.in/publisher/comments/gsat-6-indias-second-military-satellite-launched>.

⁵⁵ Ajay Banerjee, "GSAT to bolster Army's rapid strike capability", *Tribune India*, August 29, 2015.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/nation/gsat-to-bolster-army-s-rapid-strike-capability-125450/>

⁵⁶ Anil Kumar, "India Eyes Satellite Constellation to Bolster its Military Operations" *India Strategic*, September 23, 2023. <https://www.indiastrategic.in/india-eyes-satellite-constellation-to-bolster-its-military-operations/>.

⁵⁷ Major General (retd) P K Chakravorty, "Indian Army's procurement drive enhances combat readiness" *Aviation-Defence- Universe*, January 13, 2021. <https://www.aviation-defence-universe.com/indian-army-procurement-drive-enhances-combat-readiness/>.

providing modern weapons and equipment but also sharing their technology under *make in India* program.⁵⁸ In this way India would improve its overall military capabilities and overcome gap on its military might which may create serious challenges for Pakistan in the longer run.

India's strategic alliances with Russia, US, Israel and others powers would revamp their military prowess, fill the gaps in their war fighting capabilities, improve the indigenous defense industry through make in India initiative and help India to establish its undeniable hegemony in the region and beyond. These alliances would also help India to improve its political clout in the world, undermine Pakistan's diplomatic repute/image in the world and influence other powers through its offensive diplomacy. Chanakya writes in his book *Arthashastra* "a dog on land drags the crocodile. A crocodile in water drags the dog. The place of fight is important" (Subramanian 1990). All India's military strategy is focused on plain and dessert areas along the Pakistani border. The Indian military's doctrinal transformation from Sunderji Doctrine of 1980s to Cold Start Doctrine or proactive military operations and now the New Land Warfare Doctrine of 2018, all these doctrines focused on quick and swift operations against Pakistan. The Indian military's acquisition of Modern Tanks, Air defense systems, Aircraft, UAVs, advance Artillery and ISR capabilities are in line with these doctrines. India want to achieve strategic dominance in the region.

Double Stratagem- (Double Policy)

The Indian approach towards Pakistan has always been aggressive since its inception. Both countries have been involved in relentless hostilities. In that context the Indian government always employed double stratagem against Pakistan. Chanakya Kauṭilya writes in his book *Arthashastra* that, "when faced with double stratagem and seeking refuge, he should seek to double stratagem; for someone who employs double stratagem focusses on his own activities and serves only his own interests, however who takes refuge serves the interests of the other and not his own". Alternatively, if he finds himself on the flanks of two strong kings, he should take counter measures against an immediate danger.⁵⁹ Making Peace with one and while making war with another. Double Stratagem is pursuing a peace pact and initiating hostilities at the same time.⁶⁰ India after its independence from the Brits faced China and Pakistan as hostile neighbors. After a humiliating defeat in 1962 war with China, India decided to maintain peace with them and pursued aggressive policies towards Pakistan.⁶¹ Indian government's double policy is evident from the fact that all their military deployment, forward bases and doctrines are focused against Pakistan. However, it has deployed a meagre force against China. Which shows true depiction of their double stratagem towards Pakistan in South Asia.

Conclusion

The study has found great relevance of the Chanakya Kautilya's realist approach on the contemporary Indian strategic thinking. Kautilya's 'Mandala Theory' and 'Six-Fold Policy' has applicability when we discuss the strategic culture of India. In *Arthashastra*, Kauṭilya argued that war has three types: First type is open war which is a declared war. Second is secret war which deals with sudden attack or war through deception, opening two fronts, terrorizing from one side and opening another front creating two front war dilemma for an enemy, which is a clear-cut depiction of modern Indian strategic thinking with reference to its CSD which

⁵⁸ Sujay Rao Mandavilli, *Making India a scientific and an intellectual powerhouse: Why we should also help everyone else*. India.: Sujay Rao Mandavilli, 2024, 24.

⁵⁹ Kauṭilya. *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya's Arthaśāstra*. United Kingdom: OUP USA, 2013.

⁶⁰ B Guy Peters and Jon Pierre, *The SAGE Handbook of Public Administration*. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, 2012, 249.

⁶¹ Jagannath P. Panda, *India-China Relations: Politics of Resources, Identity and Authority in a Multipolar World Order*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2016, 37.

aims at multiple thrusts, blitzkrieg type of operations within 96 hours? Third, the most significant type of war is an *undeclared war*, which could be related to the hybrid warfare of the Indian military in modern times. The study has found that the Indian military has applied all these wars against Pakistan and the undeclared war or hybrid war is still going on, making difficult for Pakistan to manage its internal security situation, overcome its socio-economic woes, settle ethno-political wrangling and cope up with emerging geostrategic challenges in the shape of hostile neighborhood in Afghanistan and Iran; a clear depiction of 'Mandala Theory' which talks about a neighbor as an enemy. The study found that the hybrid warfare has created more problems for Pakistan than direct military operations since 1947. It appears that this trend would continue unless both states realize that proxy wars or covert operations against each other are impracticable in the modern times. Since, India and Pakistan are nuclear weapon states and it is impossible for either party to win over the other. The ultimate solution is continuity of dialogue process. Both countries must build trust and amicably resolve all their outstanding disputes. It is imperative that India and Pakistan must start from what we call 'low hanging fruits' Sir Creek and Siachen disputes which could be resolved in a short span of time. Then, the next issue would be Kashmir dispute which would require an unwavering negotiation process involving all stake holders including Pakistan, Kashmir and India. It is necessary that India and Pakistan must learn from their past mistakes and deviate from costly arms race and spend that money on the human resource development of the millions of people starving in both countries. Both the countries have taken positions which have political implications for both within their own countries. For example, in Pakistan nobody can ever imagine that any government can afford to forget about Kashmir. Same is the situation in India. The Indian politico-military leadership must realize this fact that, when a nation decides to get independence ultimately, and they are also prepared to sacrifice, it cannot be stopped, Pakistan's creation is an ample prove. If they read writing on the wall as far as Kashmir is concerned option will be to enter negotiations and try to avoid bloodshed and ultimately decide something in a mutually beneficial manner. There must be a negotiated solution on both sides. We have gotten immense potential in this region, entire region can flourish with inter-regional connectivity with Central Asia, Russia and China. Dialogue and reconciliation are the only way out and one condition add to the dialogue that there should be consistent dialogue.