

Kautilya and Modern Day Strategic Advising

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Abstract

As policy and decision makers evaluate the global strategic environment they must understand the underlying cultural and historical context in which competitors and allies view the actions taken and statements made by the United States. Kautilya's "The Arthashastra" provides key insights for evaluating the actions undertaken by other nations and assists in determining the motives behind them. Understanding Kautilya's writing requires a basic level of background information on Kautilya himself and his intent for writing "The Arthashastra." Using the disciplines of an effective strategic advisor to evaluate Kautilya's insights provides a clear categorization of his thoughts and can assist in applying his principles where they are applicable. Finally, applying Kautilya's theory to modern day actions highlights an alternative method for viewing available information and establishing the context associated with observed actions.

Kautilya and Modern Day Strategic Advising

A king can reign only with the help of others; one wheel alone does not move (a chariot). Therefore, a king should appoint advisers (as councilors and ministers) and listen to their advice.

—Kautilya¹

As officers proceed through the ranks of the United States (U.S.) military they must not only demonstrate the capability of executing a given task but also the ability to provide insight on issues and events to assist in the formulation of plans and options. Their advice shapes the manner in which a decision maker interprets a given situation and ensures an informed decision is made. While the number of senior leadership positions within the Department of Defense (DoD) is relatively limited, most officers, including the ones selected for senior command, will serve as strategic advisors to both military and civilian leaders. Developing an officer to become a strategic advisor involves creating and/or sharpening a number of internal attributes, one of which being the cognitive ability to interpret the actions of adversaries and competitors. The Indian strategic thinker Kautilya's writings encapsulated within *The Arthashastra* provide essential insights for strategic advisors as they evaluate internal and external factors to provide acuity to senior leaders during the decision-making process.

How was Kautilya able to educate, advise and vector his leadership so as to effectively influence the forging of what would essentially become the modern-day state of India? Why was his advice sought after, reflected on, and immortalized in the greatest work of Indian strategic thinking that survives today? What enabled Kautilya to see beyond the established borders and norms to identify opportunities and exploit the weaknesses of his kingdom's adversaries? Are his writings, teachings, and advice timeless in their applicability and thus worthy of our study so as to understand the

complex cultural viewpoints of other nations, particularly within Asia? Exploring the answers to these questions requires analytical rigor and the application of a framework that empowers both comprehension of and the ability to apply these answers to modern day situations.

To determine how Kautilya can assist U.S. decision makers and strategic advisors in viewing the statements and actions of adversaries and competing states this paper first presents background information on Kautilya, highlighting the purpose and intent of his writings, provides an overview of *The Arthashastra*, and offers some modern-day perceptions of Kautilya's writing. Following the introduction to Kautilya this paper evaluates his writings against the seven disciplines proposed by James E. Lukaszewski as critical to maximizing the delivery of strategic advice; specifically: being trustworthy, becoming a verbal visionary, developing a leadership perspective, thinking strategically, understanding the power of patterns, advising constructively, and finally showing the decision maker how to use the advice.² After linking Kautilya's writing to the disciplines of strategic advising this paper next applies Kautilya's perspective to modern day strategic issues by evaluating both China's view of unlimited war and Russia's modern day approach to war. Finally, the conclusion connects all of the pieces of the discussion together and provides recommendations for follow on research.

Strategic advisors come in all shapes and sizes, with varied educational backgrounds and experiences, but they all share a common thread, access to senior leaders. C.S. Lewis describes the notion of an "inner ring" that is formed not solely through the establishment of a hierarchal structure, but through relationships and the desire individuals have to participate in the decision-making processes.³ The access

granted by a strategic leader is essential for a strategic advisor to effectively contribute to the mission. Thus, an effective strategic advisor operates at the strategic level of an organization, possesses either the subject matter expertise in a particular field or a diverse knowledge base that can be accessed and applied across the spectrum of activity, has the propensity for multi-dimensional collaboration across organizations within a bounded network, and most critically has access to and the trust of the senior leader. While the ultimate responsibility for decisions rest with senior leaders, strategic advisors prepare them to make choices and decisions by examining the information available, determining the context behind the activity, and clearly articulating both the situation and the options available for execution. Evaluating Kautilya and his writings' impact on modern-day cultures provides strategic advisors with a better understanding of the decision-making processes of competitors or adversaries by correctly interpreting observable actions.

Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, and Modern-Day Applicability

Kautilya (also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta) was an ancient Indian strategy master and strategic advisor to the Indian king Chandragupta Maurya (founder of the Maurya Empire (320 BCE – 298 BCE) who wrote on statecraft in the 4th century BCE.⁴ Kautilya's goal was to develop a comprehensive guide that would enable kings to effectively lead the governance of a country, and advise them on the proper utilization of the elements of power available as they lead their country toward world domination. This work is known as *The Arthashastra*. While doubts have been raised concerning both Kautilya's participation in writing *The Arthashastra* and even his very existence (versus multiple authors writing under a pseudonym) this paper assumes that he did exist and directly contributed to the development of this strategic masterpiece.⁵ As with

the study of any ancient figure, it is difficult to ascertain fact from fiction from the sparse references available on the life, experiences, and education of Kautilya. While much of his history is unknown, shrouded in mystery, or articulated in the form of folklore, it is accepted fact that he was an educator, advisor, and senior leader within the Maurya Empire during its expansion over the Indian subcontinent.⁶

It is said that Kautilya was born with a full set of teeth, which was considered by the Indian culture as the mark of a future king; however, his parents had the teeth removed as they did not want him to become a king which led Kautilya down the path of becoming a king maker instead.⁷ Much of his early life is not recorded. He may have been educated in the famous University town of Taxila. A Buddhist source states that from an early age Kautilya was, “known for his proficiency in the three Vedas, in the mantras, skill in stratagem, dexterity in intrigue and policy, but also for his physical ugliness, disgusting complexion, deformity of legs and other limbs.”⁸ While in the court of Dhana-Nanda, Kautilya and the king had a disagreement that led to Kautilya vowing to destroy the Nanda dynasty and provoked his subsequent search for, discovery of and instruction for the boy Chandragupta who would eventually serve as his proxy for realizing that vow.⁹ Kautilya’s importance in Indian culture and modern day thinking is reflected with his selection for immortalization in Indian poetry (extremely rare for historical figures) in the play *The Mudraraksasa* where Kautilya’s defeat of the Nanda dynasty is depicted through the use of subterfuge in recruiting the Nanda chancellor Raksasa to betray his leader and then support Chandragupta’s endeavor.¹⁰

Following his campaign in India, Alexander the Great withdrew the Greek army back to Macedon leaving only a few scattered outposts with a force presence that was

incapable of warding off emerging local fiefdoms eager to regain control over their home territory.¹¹ The power vacuum created by the withdrawing Greek army resulted in anarchy across the region and provided a critical opportunity for Chandragupta Maurya to launch a military campaign that solidified control and established the foundation of the Mauryan Empire.¹² Chandragupta was aided by his strategic advisor and Prime Minister, Chancellor Kautilya during the military campaign to consolidate the disparate fiefdoms and establish an Indian empire. Kautilya saw the presence of many fiefdoms as opportunities to play one side off of another, always to the benefit of his growing kingdom. As a strategic advisor, Kautilya endeavored every day, with every opportunity, and through all engagements to place the king and his nation in a position of strategic advantage over his competitors and adversaries.

Kautilya's *The Arthashastra* sought to aid his king (or really any ruler) by establishing an enduring body of knowledge that outlined how to carry out the principal functions of statecraft. Kautilya sought to articulate the relationship between the ruler, his ministers, and the people by codifying the art of governance so any ruler could apply his teachings to their own set of circumstances. At its core *The Arthashastra* is a treatise attempting to establish foundational precepts for a strategic advisor to rely on when providing advice and guidance to a senior decision maker. Kautilya's thick tome of knowledge seeks to share critical information with those who are interested in leading and advising, increasing their influence, and establishing a single unifying entity capable of effectively and efficiently administering a nation. The timelessness of the lessons offered by Kautilya is a critical piece of his life's work. While not every specific recommendation applies today in the same manner as when it was written, the content

of the document provides strategic advisors insight into the core principles for administering nations and executing foreign policy.

With the protection and expansion of his sovereign's state at the forefront of Kautilya's mind, he devoted significant attention towards articulating his perceptions, thoughts and recommendations on war and foreign policy. Kautilya's view of constant inter-state friction is emphasized by the four kinds of war he identifies for his king to leverage as he endeavors to achieve his goals. The first, Mantrayuddha, or 'war by counsel' is the implementation of the diplomatic instrument of power to achieve results through diplomacy, specifically utilized when in a weaker position than an adversary.¹³ The second type of war, Prakasayuddha, is open warfare involving the military forces of the state when in a position of advantage over an adversary.¹⁴ The third and fourth types of war identified by Kautilya, Kutayuddha and Gudayuddha, where the first involves concealed warfare primarily through psychological operations (i.e. sabotage in an enemy camp), and the latter deals specifically with clandestine warfare where covert methods, including assassinations, are used to achieve objectives without waging a battle.¹⁵ It is significant to note that Kautilya places no significance on any type of war, but instead focuses the advisor on achieving his objectives through the most efficient method available.

Kautilya's attributes foreign policy, where nations act in their own diplomatic, military, and economic self-interest, as the key to solidifying and expanding the influence of a nation. He suggests methods for categorizing a nation's foreign policy in a six-fold plan that covers the full spectrum of international relations. Within the context of foreign policy Kautilya identifies making peace, waging war, staying quiet, preparing for

war, seeking protection, and the dual policy of making peace with one while waging war against another as the approaches available to a king pursuing their national interest within the international arena.¹⁶ For Kautilya, international order and peace were not considered significant as he advised a king immersed in a competitive environment where his objective was to solidify power and influence to the detriment of other nation states. Out of this environment was born his mandala theory where a series of relationship circles are drawn around a state with all states on its bordered as enemies and any state that borders the enemies recognized as friends.¹⁷ This theory envisions an ultra-realist relationship between states where a government's foreign policy is solely focused on taking actions in the interest of the state and viewing all outsiders as either current or future adversaries.

Applying the insights and teachings from a document written in antiquity to modern day situations is easily done due to the intrinsic nature of man and the persistent dilemmas that transcend time to confront contemporary strategic advisors and leaders. The modern era presents a number of complex problems that are not dissimilar to those faced by Kautilya during his rise and reign of influence. On both the global and regional stage there exists a strategic environment where competition drives an adversarial relationship between existing powers in the West and emerging and revanchist powers in the East who seek to challenge established norms and institutions as they compete for global power.¹⁸ The elemental truth throughout history is that nations consider security and stability as their core national interest. The relative peace enjoyed by people today, thanks to the post World War II global order established by the Allies, still faces security challenges (e.g. porous borders, increasing influence of

non-state actors) that undermine territorial security which reinforces Kautilya's thoughts on perpetual conflict.¹⁹ The ageless perceptions and knowledge offered in Kautilya's *The Arthashastra* concerning the nature and character of man and the state of international politics remains as applicable today for a strategic advisor as it did when originally inscribed.

Kautilya as a Strategic Advisor

Kautilya operated as a key advisor to the Indian King Chandragupta and sought to encapsulate his interpretation of the science of politics in a work that would instruct kings on how to properly govern their states. Whether in the ancient or modern world the counsel provided by a strategic advisor must adhere to some basic principles to ensure the advice is received, respected and ultimately acted upon by a senior leader. James E. Lukaszewski categorizes such principles in his book *Why should the boss Listen to You?* by identifying seven disciplines required of effective strategic advisors. Applying Lukaszewski's disciplines of being trustworthy, becoming a verbal visionary, developing a leadership perspective, thinking strategically, understanding the power of patterns, advising constructively, and showing the decision maker how to use your advice is a helpful framework to evaluate Kautilya's writings and explore his teaching as they apply to today's strategic advisor.²⁰ While there are challenges associated with applying this framework to a historical theorist, an effective strategic advisor incorporates these disciplines that transcend both time and culture as they seek to deliver the best possible advice.

Senior leaders value advisors who are both trustworthy and loyal as they seek to gain knowledge to better understand the environment surrounding a specific situation or decision. An effective leader-advisor relationship dynamic necessitates openness,

candor, and truthfulness between the parties as the strategic advisor offers perspective with the focus always being on what actions will be most beneficial to the leader.²¹ Kautilya addresses the need of trust for those advising a king when he highlights the attributes that should be considered for a counselor or minister. Those selected to advise at the highest form of government must be firm in their loyalty while not being fickle in their support.²² Trust is the foundation for the strategic leader-advisor relationship and is the core requirement that enables all of the other disciplines to function. Issues with easy solutions are solved at the lower echelons of management, thus the problems that reach the executive level for action are complex and require a leader's faith in a strategic advisor's observations, insights, and judgements as they chart the path forward.

The second discipline associated with being an effective strategic advisor focuses on being a verbal visionary by mastering the communication skills necessary to articulate an idea in a manner that is digestible by a strategic leader. Having a good idea is merely the first step. A strategic advisor must be able to package the thought, provide justification, defend it against reprisals, and finally coherently deliver the message. Kautilya highlights the importance for a strategic advisor's communication abilities in a section dedicated to the appointment, responsibilities, and vetting of a potential minister. He mandates that all qualities of a potential appointee be evaluated by examining his past performance to determine intelligence, perseverance and dexterity, by experts who test the candidate's knowledge level of the various arts and finally by the king himself, who should personally interview the candidate minister to ascertain if he has the eloquence, boldness, and presence of mind to effectively

advise.²³ The highlighting of eloquence as a key trait for a minister signifies the importance Kautilya places on a strategic advisor's ability to effectively communicate his thoughts and recommendations to a leader.

The third discipline of an effective strategic advisor involves the development of a leadership perspective where the advisor is able to interpret the organization's overarching strategy, its current plans, and fundamental metrics through the eyes of the leader.²⁴ In order to influence the senior leader, a strategic advisor must understand the beliefs and perspectives that influence how the leader will perceive both actions and words as they offer advice that seeks to alter perceptions and outlooks.²⁵ Developing a leadership perspective requires a commitment to the leader for offering unbiased opinions that are not unduly influenced by personal agendas. In a section addressing the roles of a minister Kautilya specifically highlights the need for a minister to constantly think about everything that concerns the king in addition to those concerns of an adversary.²⁶ This is a critical point. Kautilya saw the necessity for an advisor to not only look internally at the organization, but also externally to determine what threats exist and why they are present in order to construct the best possible advice for a decision.

The fourth discipline of an effective strategic advisor recognizes the need to think strategically and provide the advice necessary to enable a senior leader to make decisions that will best benefit the organization. At the higher echelons of management individuals are far removed from the mechanics of accomplishing specific tasks and instead focus on building a strategy that serves to orient and lead an organization toward an envisioned goal or objective. People have a tendency to compartmentalize

their thinking as it applies to the position they currently hold. Every staff function is critical to developing a comprehensive understanding of an issue as they evaluate and offer insight into the situation using their specific lens. Leaders and strategic advisors must be able to aggregate these perspectives to develop a holistic view of the issues, cut across the functional areas and see how the efforts of the whole can be integrated to achieve a desired effect. As one of history's most astute strategic theorists, Kautilya offers numerous examples of thinking strategically. One of the best examples of this is articulated in the methods applied to the stronger, equally strong or weak kings where Kautilya says that a king must make peace with an equally strong king, wage war against a weaker king, and not wage war against a stronger king.²⁷ By always keeping the ultimate objective of eventually attaining absolute rule, Kautilya demands that a leader and their advisors evaluate every action to ensure it directly supports the achievement of the strategy.

Understanding the power of patterns is the fifth discipline an effective strategic advisor must master as they evaluate the information available for the ultimate purpose of determining what the future will entail. Patterns come in all shapes and sizes and their existence and importance are sometimes extremely difficult to ascertain.

Anticipating the future through predictive analysis requires identification of the aspects, qualities, or characteristics that can be distinctively categorized to determine if a causal relationship exists as it applies to a specific scenario. Pattern-related thinking enables an advisor to understand more than just the individual fragment of a problem as they piece together disparate pieces of information and view the situation holistically. This enables the advisor to become an effective forecaster as he or she identifies the crucial

similarities that will impact the strategy, approach, and outcome of a recommended action.²⁸ The entire premise of Kautilya's *The Arthashastra* is centered around learning from previous endeavors and applying these best practices to everything from governance to fortification building and even criminal investigations. Kautilya recognized the importance of patterns and sought, through the publication of *The Arthashastra*, to assist those coming after him with the basic principles necessary to manipulate observed patterns to deliver the desired outcomes sought by a strategic leader.

Advising constructively constitutes the sixth discipline of an effective strategic advising and entails presenting and preserving options for a decision maker based on a specific situation. Operational thinking and decision making involve different types of thought processes that a strategic advisor must be able to comprehend when packaging a message to a senior leader. Structuring the advice to conform to the six management decision-making components of situation, analysis, goals, options, recommendations, and justifications will ensure the message is delivered in a logical form, based on facts, provides real-time value, and is outcome focused.²⁹ Kautilya explores this concept with the creation of a checklist like approach when considering a question or scenario. Kautilya takes a checklist like approach to this evaluation by identifying five aspects of deliberation that enable a strategic advisor to add value to any discussion. This deliberation methodology calls for strategic advisors to first identify the objectives that must be achieved, next articulate the means available for carrying out the tasks, then ascertain the availability of men and materials for the proposal, decide on the time, place and type of action necessary, and finally develop contingency plans against potential failure.³⁰

The final discipline for a strategic advisor entails showing the decision maker how they can best use the advice provided. Recognizing the entrance into a transition period is extremely difficult as leaders develop a comfort level with their perception of reality, become complacent, and ultimately arrive late to need when an unanticipated tectonic shift occurs. An advisor can provide relevance by questioning assumptions and offering advice to shape, sway, or alter the false perceptions of a strategic leader. The strategic advisor must reveal to a decision maker the ramifications of their actions so they can conduct a cost/benefit analysis and more effectively operate in this information environment.³¹ Kautilya discusses the giving of advice to a king in simple terms requiring a minister to offer good and pleasing advice when called upon, never offering advice that is harmful just because it is what the monarch wants to hear, and to only provide advice that will not please the monarch in private and only after receiving their permission.³² Understanding when to deliver the advice so the decision maker can best receive the information and then take the necessary action is the first step in showing the leader how to best use the advice offered.

Applying Kautilya's Perspective

The application of Kautilya's teachings goes far beyond philosophical insights by establishing the framework for a cognitive tool that transcends time and allows a strategic advisor to both analyze the present and most importantly anticipate the future.³³ The modern world offers numerous situations where Kautilya's perspectives on international relations can be applied to the conduct and activities of nation states as they pursue policies that place their self-interest at the forefront. The U.S. National Defense Strategy categorizes the emerging significant threats within the global security environment in a 2+3 construct where strategic competition with China and Russia is

identified as the central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security.³⁴ A strategic advisor's ability to view events, analyze the environment, and ascertain the intentions behind the actions observed enables coherent recommendations to a leader that will achieve end states or objectives within the operating environment and are consistent with cultural, political, or religious considerations.³⁵ Applying Kautilya's perspective to today's security environment directly supports the U.S. defense strategy where it calls for seizing the initiative by exploiting the areas where it possess advantages and competitors lack strength.³⁶ As the primary concern for U.S. national security has shifted away from terrorism to inter-state strategic competition the application of Kautilya's mandala theory is apt in highlighting the tensions between states, and assists a strategic advisor in articulating the competitive nature inherent in today's security environment.³⁷

The People's Republic of China (China) view of unlimited warfare resembles Kautilya's views on foreign policy and manifests itself in the type of governance China has adopted, the announced "One Belt, One Road" initiative, and their engagement with the Philippines concerning South China Sea territorial disputes. Viewing Russian actions as they slide away from democracy toward autocratic rule, their steps to become a reemergent power, and their activity attempting to weaken and subvert the United States, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO) can also be evaluated using Kautilya's writings.

Since his election as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China in 2013, Xi Jinping has taken steps to significantly centralize the institutional power of his position and personally assume newly created leadership positions. Xi has elevated policy decision-making, infused systemic thinking and implemented top-down design

modes in his endeavor to transform the way in which the Chinese elites govern the country.³⁸ This consolidation of power within a government to a central office is exactly in line with Kautilya's view of how a government should operate. He doesn't compare and contrast the different forms of government available for a nation. To Kautilya, an absolute monarch is the ideal solution where order is administered through professional bureaucracies and military forces.³⁹ Viewing these actions through a Kautilyan lens enlightens an outside observer to the consolidation of power within China as a method to understand the lightening pace of change occurring on the world stage as we enter into the cyber era. A central body that is vested with the authority to execute its vision is able to compress its orient and decide timeframes as it observes the world and decides on specific actions.

As China attempts to increase its influence on the world stage it is using the economic instrument of power to expand external economic ties to realize its China Dream policy by announcing an aggressive economic expansion plan that has evolved into the "One Belt, One Road" initiative.⁴⁰ This initiative seeks to link China to countries throughout the Eurasia region by establishing an economic belt of nations, specifically tied to the Chinese economy through the development of transportation hubs and lines of communication (e.g. railway routes, highways, port facilities, and energy pipelines). This plan would delight Kautilya with his view that a weaker nation must develop relationships that will facilitate its emergent power base with the objective of eventually achieving parity and then surpassing the competitor. The global scale of this initiative may seem to expand beyond Kautilya's teachings, but his viewpoint on playing

bordering fiefdoms off of each other as a nation consolidates power is the foundation for the global economic enterprise China is slowly building.

China also wields its diplomatic instrument of power through its influence in international organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization where its primary purpose is to establish political, economic, and security cooperation.⁴¹ China's inability to achieve its objectives using its inferior military instrument of national power against its main rival (the U.S.) forces it to take a Kautilyan approach to gain support and increase its power as it grows strong enough to eventually defeat an adversary. Kautilya devotes a great deal of effort elaborating on the means and methods at the disposal of the king for formulating and implementing his foreign policy. He calls special attention to the significance of the diplomatic instrument of power in war by calling for a diplomatic offensive and highlighting the importance of covert action that occurs within the realms of his enemies.⁴² Kautilya's ultra-realist vision of international relations drives his perception that states behave in a manner that is directly proportional to the power they are able to wield. A strategic advisor's understanding of how adversaries leverage all of the elements of power organic to their state enables them to see how strategic victory can be achieved by effecting change in both the mind and will of the adversary.

China's declaration of the nine-dash line where it claimed most of the South China Sea (SCS) as its sovereign territory has led to its confrontation with eight countries, with the Philippines initially filing a dispute with the United Nations (UN) to adjudicate the claim. The UN ruled that China was infringing on the sovereign rights of the Philippines when, "On 12 July 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) ruled in favor of the

Philippines in 14 of its 15 submissions against China's expansive territorial claims in the South China Sea."⁴³ Following this decision China leveraged its massive economic instrument of power and began limiting its trade ties with the Philippines government which had a significant impact. For the Philippine government the necessity of now outweighed the auxiliary benefit of tomorrow so they backed off their SCS claims and have worked with China in the attempt to garner whatever gain they can. The behavior of both China and the Philippines can be explained using Kautilya's teachings.

International relations between states is driven by the behavior of states as they view the relative power they are able to exert influence or compel a competitor or adversary to do their bidding.⁴⁴ Thus, a convergence of Thucydides and Kautilya occurs with this example where China (the strong) is able to do what it wills while the Philippines (the weak) must suffer what they must.

Moving to an evaluation of modern day Russian actions as viewed through a Kautilyan lens the first item of discussion concerns governance. Like China, but much further along the path and to a much larger degree, Russia is sliding toward a more authoritarian government where a single individual controls the governance of the nation. Domestically, Russia went through a significant emotional period following the break-up of the Soviet and the subsequent loss of super-power status. Their brief democratic experiment led to economic and military decline which resulted in both social and political culture breakdown. The emergence of an authoritarian regime that inculcates Russian exceptionalism and solidifies the domestic drive to regain the power and influence they once possessed is a significant force with the Russian populace. Viewing this transition through the lens of Kautilya results in similar findings associated

with China's move to centralization. Even more so in Russia, where civil unrest was so much higher, Kautilya takes great effort in articulating the means and methods available for establishing and preserving power even while adversarial powers, political subversion, and social instability threaten the regime.⁴⁵

The 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union led to a significant decrease in Russian influence and power within Eurasia. Viewing NATO's defensive reassurance activities such as reinforcing military capabilities and expanding its membership to countries close to Russian borders as a direct and major external threat to its national security, the Kremlin began taking steps to regain control of the Eurasia region.⁴⁶ Russia's subsequent use of its military instrument of national power to achieve its strategic objectives in the Ukraine, Georgia, and Syria has undermined the post-World War II world order where state sovereignty is paramount and dialogue and compromise are preferred over armed conflict. Additionally, Russia wields its economic instrument of national power by establishing a network of financial and political patronage relationships with susceptible governments, enabling Russia to both influence and direct the actions of those associate states.⁴⁷ Russian actions short of conventional war have been called 'hybrid warfare' where its military doctrine (nicknamed the Gerasimov doctrine after the Russian general who first published on the idea) where a complex use of military force, political, economic, informational and other atypical means of warfare are applied with a large use of the population's protest potential to achieve its objectives.⁴⁸ This Kautilyan model of weakening an opponent can be seen as Russia leverages its energy, financial, and military resources to deliberately erode democratic practices, support anti-European and anti-American sentiments, and spread corruption.

This competition short of open warfare has resulted in many Eurasian countries adopting non-Western policies and authoritarian practices which are in accordance with Russian strategic ends.⁴⁹

The impact of Russian actions to weaken and subvert the European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the credibility of Western democracies is consistent with the Kautilyan view of waging war. The defensive and economic institutions established following World-War II are the foundation for American prosperity and thus a target for potential adversaries. Russia is able to leverage geographic proximity and its position as an energy exporter to eliminate free and fair economic relationships within the Eurasian region. Stability and the unfettered access to global markets is a core U.S. interest. Russian actions and expanding military capabilities create an unstable frontier within Eurasia resulting in increased risk of conflict due to the possibility of strategic miscalculation.⁵⁰ Conversely, U.S. interests in Eurasia propagate Western beliefs and values which are at odds with Putin's agenda of ending the Western dominated world order and expanding Russian relevance in Eurasia and globally.

Conclusion

As strategic advisors prepare themselves to fully appreciate the environmental factors associated with a situation they must evaluate the issue from multiple perspectives. The understanding arrived at by fully comprehending an issue ensures they can fulfill their critical function of providing the best possible advice to inform a senior leader's decision. The strategic theorist Kautilya is unfamiliar to many professionals in the West but his teachings underpin a realist view of international relations and may be the best lens available to view the actions of some states,

organizations, and leaders. Additional research into how individual cultures and basic human behavior reflect Kautilya's teaching would provide additional clarity to international relations theory. This paper illustrates that Kautilya's insights into the nature and character of warfare, and human attitudes and behavior stand the test of time. They are as applicable today as when they were originally composed. The determination of a competitor's intentions is difficult to ascertain. Kautilya's writings, however, provide a model that can be used to evaluate, interpret, and predict the actions of an advisory or a competitor.

Comprehending Kautilya's teachings can enable a strategic advisor's ability to skillfully inform a decision maker. The study of Kautilya and other strategic theorists provides strategic advisors essential knowledge to begin the formulation of the judgements and predictions that will assist in achieving the desired objective. Background information on Kautilya, evaluation of his writing against, "the seven disciplines of a trusted strategic advisor" and finally application of his perspectives to modern-day strategic issues involving China and Russia presented in this monograph provides a strategic advisor the ability to understand how to achieve a position of advantage and provides insight into how he educated, advised, and vectored his leader so effectively. While some may claim that his ideas are too old and no longer apply to the fast-paced, technology driven 21st century world the fact remains that while the ways and means have changed the ends remain static and human behavior still drives the setting of conditions for strategy development.

Endnotes

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²² Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, 98.

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