

Vedic Scriptures and National Security

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Abstract

Security needs a well defined 'from what' aspect that always includes threats from both within and outside. The nation relies on the armies only for threats from outside. The armies defend our nation from attacks {land, sea and air} on the borders. Internal threats are expected to be thwarted by bodies such as the Police and Central Bureau of Investigation.

The vedic scriptures implore the rulers or decision makers to be pro-active. Nations are expected to build deterrents and immunization shields. These measures prevent the enemies from attacking the nation.

1. Types of Threats

The threats could be handled either by defending with the military hardware whenever such attacks take place or by building a counter attack capability which could act as a deterrent or by building shields or immunizations to neutralize the enemy's capabilities. Security thus has several strategic defense related components.

The security could be built with any one or by adopting all of the above. Defense is only a part of the solution to a nation's security threats.

The types of threats are mentioned below :

- 1. Hostile Nation's attack on Land, Sea, Air.**
- 2. Space Threats :** This differs from Air, in the sense that Air could be classified upto the atmospheric level and beyond that we could treat it as space. There are

several technologies exist now, which operate from this area. Examples are Remote sensing spy satellites, Missiles that could be fired from those satellites or space stations.

3. **Environmental threats** : With the advancement of Biological and Chemical Weapons, many countries might consider in future, to fight an adversary without infringing the enemy's territory (land, water or Air) by spreading biological and chemical agents in the atmosphere.
4. **Systemic threats** : Hostile nations could jam or intercept the signals from our satellites, relay stations or clog the communication networks like telephone exchanges with flooding of calls etc.
5. **Nuclear threats** : There are two or three types of threats. One is attack by a nuclear power, the second by blowing the nuclear reactors within our nation and third could be system failure of our nuclear plants like Chernobyl Accident in erstwhile Soviet Union.
6. **Terrorist threats** : There are three types of terrorist threats, one is human, which is mindless massacre of people, the second is Economic terrorism, in which the main economic infrastructures are targeted and the third is symbolic terrorism which is attacking Governmental buildings, attacks during major events etc.
7. **Intellectual threat** : This type of threat is by assassination of experts or luring of experts to other countries thereby disabling the country from benefiting from the intellectual contributions of those experts (in simple terms Brain Drain), threatening freedom of thoughts, denial of patents etc.
8. **Economic threat** : Blocking production capacities by producing less than what has been approved by Government there by creating a supply shortage, not implementing the commitments made at the time of approval, monopolies, undue project delays which will deny the country from benefiting from the projects as planned while at the same time increasing the cost, Substandard technology transfers, non-implementation of newer technologies, sudden pullout of MNCs, price fixing etc.
9. **Speculative threats** : Currency and commodity speculation could damage the economic stability as could be seen by what happened to Malaysia. (The economy of this country is good but currency speculation has made the economy on a tailspin..)

10. Spying, bugging , Assassinations and Natural disasters

2. Strategies for handling the threats

Some major strategies and methods available to handle threats are outlined below.

1. **Preventive** : No nation is an island. Every nation has enemies and friends. Some nations can be friends or enemies to both the nations at war. The impact of every policy on the relationships amongst nations is made.
2. **Pre-emptive** : Under this strategy, we could pre-empt the strike either diplomatic or military by attacking before our enemy strikes.

3. **Defensive** : This strategy is to set up the defense mechanisms whenever the expected attack (diplomatic or military) materializes to prevent or reduce the damage that could be caused by such attack.
4. **Warning mechanisms** : In case we could not deploy defensive mechanisms against the expected attack either due to lack of capability or if not feasible then we could employ the tactics of forming Advance Warning mechanisms in place so that we get sufficient time to avoid or reduce the damage.
5. **Damage control** : These strategies are to be followed to basically reduce the impact of any suspected attack materializes either with prior warning or not.
6. **Deterrence** : Under this we could create enough capabilities to assure our enemy of mutual destruction.
7. **Neutralizing** : Under this strategy, we could build capabilities to neutralize our enemy's capabilities.
8. **Diversionsary** : Under this strategy, we could make marginal investments in few of the technologies and create a huge larger than reality media blitz about it. The enemy may be enticed into spreading its resources thin.
9. **Diplomatic** : Establishing direct communications with the various heads of Governments, especially the leaders of the Security council and other leading countries.
10. **Multi-lateral Mechanisms** : Enter into some kind of agreement like we did with Soviet Union, which could prevent others from considering attack on us. Sign multi-lateral treaties with our enemies with the third countries as mediators and guarantors for that accord.

3. Learning security from the Vedas

During the days of monarchy, the cities and towns were built in accordance with the Vastu Shastra. It was thus believed that 'super natural' forces join the ranks of the king's resources to protect the kingdom. The protection was both from the attacks by other kings and natural calamities. Today there is no monarchy in India. Hence the authors are not discussing the "Vastu" aspects in detail. It is also useful to note that "**Zeus**" was the God of War in the Rig Veda.

Panchatantra, is a collection of five volumes of stories written by a teacher to help instruct the different aspects of kingdom for princes. The five volumes together serve as a manual for a prospective king or decision maker, to help him in deciding how to rule, how to choose his fellow friends, fellow ministers, how to conduct himself in daily life etc. Eventhough we do not have kings now, the stories are quite pragmatic and useful to the present day leaders.

The five tantras are :

- 1) **Mithrabheda** : Differences between friends. The hostile nation can be weakened by creating differences amongst its friendly nations.
- 2) **Mithrasamprapthi** : Union with friends or gaining strength from friendly nations.

- 3) **Kakolukiyam** : Friendship of former enemy is untrustworthy.
- 4) **Labdhapranaasam** : Unwavering Intelligence even during emergencies.
- 5) **Apareekshitkarkam** : Accomplishment of one's task using discrimination.

The primary characters in the stories happen to be animals. But the moral at the end of each story is small strategy in making nation's secure.

It is also useful to note that the scriptures based on the Vedas profess that one has to deploy the four key strategies namely Sama, Dana, Bheda and Danda judiciously. '**Sama**' is to make friends with the enemy through accords and treaties. '**Dana**' is to buy out the enemy. '**Bheda**' is to create differences amongst the ranks of the enemy. '**Danda**' or the actual war is only the final resort. The panchatantra tales delineate the timing for deploying relevant strategies.

The vedic scriptures vividly discuss the following aspects related to national security.

- Construction of Forts;
- Buildings within the Fort;
- The Superintendent and Trainers of Infantry; (Cavalry, Elephants, Chariots and Infantry were the four Arms of the Indus Valley forces, called Chaturanga 'Four Arms', from which is derived the Arabic shatranj, 'chess' the 'war game', whose earliest evidence has been found at Mohenjo daro); and
- The Duties of the Commander -in-Chief.
- Neutrality After Proclaiming War or After Concluding a Treaty of Peace,
- Marching After Proclaiming War or After Making Peace; and the March of
- Combined Powers;
- Considerations about Marching Against an Assailable Enemy and a Strong Enemy;
- Causes Leading to the Dwindling, Greed and Disloyalty of the Army; and
- Consideration About the Combination of Powers;
- The March of Combined Powers; and
- Considerations about and Enemy in the Rear.
- The knowledge of Power, Place, Time Strength and Weakness; the time of Invasion;
- The Time of Recruiting the Army; the Form of Equipment; and the Work of Arraying a Rival Force;
[senabalam tu dvividham sweeya mainthancha dwividah
moulasadhaskabhedhapyam sarasaaram punrdwidha
ashikshitham shikshitham cha gulmibhhothamagulmakam
daththasraadi swashastramtra swa vahi datthavahanam
- Sukraniti]
- Consideration of Annoyance in the Rear, and Remedies Against Internal and External Troubles; and
- Persons Associated with Traitors and Enemies.
- Encampment;

- March of the Camp; and Protection of the Army in Times of Distress and Attack;
- Forms of Treacherous Fights; Encouragement to One's Own Army, and Fight between one's Own and Enemy's Armies;
- Battlefields; the Work of Infantry, Cavalry, Chariots, and Elephants;
[Gajanam partha varmani govrishajagarani cha
Shalyakaptakalohani tanutrani mathanicha
Shathapeethani shastrani sannahaha peethalohakaha
Nanarajjana rakthaha syuh patakaha keta varsha daha
Rushyusthomaraha khadgaha nishitagra parashvayaha
Phalakaanyath charmani prathikalpyanyekashaha
Shantiparva 100]
- The Distinctive Array of Troops in Respect of Wings, Flanks, and Front;
- Distinction between Strong and Weak Troops; and Battle with Infantry, Cavalry, Chariots, and Elephants; and
- The Array of the army like a Staff, a Snake, a Circle, or in a Detached Order; the Array of an Army Against that of an Enemy.
- Battle of Intrigue;
- Slaying the commander-in-Chief and inciting a Circle of States;
- Spies with Weapons, Fire and Poison; and Destruction of Supply, Stores and Granaries; and
- Capture of the Enemy by Means of Secret Contrivances or by Means of the Army; and Complete Victory.
- Sowing the Seeds of Dissension;
- Enticement of King by Secret Contrivances;
- The Work of Spies in a Siege; and
[yo niyuktaha param karya na kuryanrupathe priyam
bhrutyo yuktaha tamahu madhyamam naram
niyukto nrupatheha karya na kuryadhaha samahitaha
bhrutyo yuktaha samardhadhra tamahuhu purushadhamam”
Agnipurana]
- The Operation of a Siege.
- Means to Injure an Enemy;
[vishena va mayaya vam shastrena govinda tathagnian va
yaihi tairupayaihi aravindanabah shatrorvdham veda vido vadanti”
Arthashastra XII, XIII, XIV]
- Wonderful and Delusive Contrivances;
- The Application of Medicines, and Mantras; and
- Remedies Against the Injuries of One's Own Army.

There are many war stories in Indic scriptures. A wide range of 'astras' or weapons have been described. Many types of battle formations are also discussed. However, the documentors of these aspects were not warriors (kshatriyas) themselves. Thus often times the details of the formations and weapon systems tends to be obscure.

In the eventuality of a war, coping with its aftermath has been elucidated in the Shantiparva of Mahabharata and Artha Shastra of Chanakya. This aspect is very unique to the Indic scriptures.

Indic scriptures not only detailed the methods of dealing with security threats but also indicated the revenues that need to be spent for security. The way the finances have to be generated and spent brings about a kind of cohesion between the civilian and defence personnel. The military, para-military and civilian personnel provide the manpower to the nation as detailed in Artha Shastra. The civilian and para-military forces ensure food security i.e freedom from hunger and malnutrition.

4. Conclusion

All the strategies that are currently deployed have been well described and documented in the Indic scriptures. In fact, all the three scenarios namely

- before war
- during War
- after War

are very vividly described in the Indic scriptures. Harnessing the supernatural powers is also a speciality of Indic scriptures.

5. References

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