CHAPTER - 4

MANU AND KAUTILYA’S IDEAS ON INTER-STATE RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

The normal state of affairs in India was for the country to be divided into a large number of Kingdoms and Principalities. The maintenance of foreign relations thus formed a very important department of the public activity of every State, and, naturally, foreign policy was regarded as an extremely useful art.

Some of the more powerful monarchs, besides maintaining friendly relations with the rulers of the other parts of India, kept up friendly relations with the kings of countries outside India. Seleukos Nikator, for instance, sent Megasthenes as ambassador to the Court of Chandragupta, and Deimachos and Dionysios were attached to the Court of Bindusara Amitraghata as ambassadors from Antiochus Soter, King of Syria, and Ptolemy Philadelphos, King of Egypt. Asoka’s edicts show that that great monarch maintained friendly relations not only with Ceylon¹ and other neighbouring countries, but also with many kings of distant countries, such as Antiochos Theos of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphos of Egypt, Antigonos Gonatas of Macedon, Magas of Gyrene, and Alexander II. of Epirus. The names of ambassadors mentioned above are, as Prof. Rapson points out, “no doubt typical of a class.” It is in every way probable that constant relations were maintained between India and the west during the period of the Maurya Empire.² Kings of other parts of India also,

1. In the Mahavamsa, Devanampiya Tissa is described as an “aly” of Asoka. There is no doubt that frequent communications took place between the two bangs. Vide Mahavamsa ch-4.
besides Magadha, kept up more or less frequent communications with foreign kings. It was known that so late as the seventh century A.D., Pulakesi, King of Maharashtra, had friendly relations with Khosru Parwiz, King of Persia, and Harshavardhana of Thanesvar maintained diplomatic relations with China.

Kautilya offered wide-ranging and truly fascinating discussions on war and diplomacy, including his wish to had his king become a world conqueror, his analysis of which kingdoms were natural allies and which were inevitable enemies, his willingness to made treaties he knew he would break, his doctrine of silent war or a war of assassination against an unsuspecting king, his approval of secret agents who killed enemy leaders and sowed discord among them, his view of women as weapons of war, his use of religion and superstition to bolster his troops and demoralize enemy soldiers, the spread of disinformation, and his humane treatment of conquered soldiers and subjects.

Although Kautilya proposed an elaborate welfare state in domestic politics, something that had been called a socialized monarchy, he proved willing to defend the general good of this monarchy with harsh measures.

Just after Alexander’s death in 323 B.C.E., Chandragupta and Kautilya began their conquest of India by stopping the Greek invaders. By taking much of western India (the Punjab and the Sindh) from the Greeks and concluding a treaty with Seleucus (Alexander the Great’s Greek heir to western India), Chandragupta and Kautilya succeeded in bringing together almost all of the Indian subcontinent. As a result, Chandragupta was, and was, considered the first unifier
of India and the first genuine emperor or king of India. The Mauryan Empire established by Chandragupta and continued by his son Bindusara (c. 293–268 B.C.E.)—whom Kautilya also advised—and by his grandson Ashoka (c. 268–232 B.C.E.) was, astonishing. With a population of about fifty million people, the Mauryan Empire was larger than the Mughal Empire two thousand years later and even larger than the British Empire in India, extending in fact all the way to the border of Persia and from Afghanistan to Bengal. Pataliputra “was about twice as large as Rome under Emperor Marcus Aurelius.”

Chandragupta Maurya consolidated an empire and passed it down intact to his son Bindusara, about whom little was known, and to his grandson Ashoka. It was argued that the extreme measures that Kautilya advocated, and some of which Chandragupta surely must had employed, were necessary to bring order and the rule of law out of chaos, making possible the emergence of Ashoka, who was widely regarded as one of the finest kings in world history. M. V. Krishna Rao contended, “As a result of the progressive secularisation of society due to the innovations contemplated by the Arthasastra and the administration of Chandragupta, the country was prepared for the reception of the great moral transformation ushered in by Asoka and his administration.”

4. Wolpert; A New History of India, 59; Mookerji, Chandragupta Maurya and His Times, 2; Bhattacharjee, History of Ancient India, p.173.
6. Bhargava; Chandragupta Maurya, p.102.
occurred during his invasion of the kingdom of Kalinga, Ashoka turned toward Buddhism and nonviolence. He declared that in the future he would conquer only by morality or by dhamma—which is a Prakrit word, often replaced by the more familiar Sanskrit word dharma—a word meaning right conduct, duty, religion, law, social justice, and responsibility. Dhamma, or dharma, was Ashoka’s all-encompassing principle. In his First Pillar Edict, he announced, “For this was my principle: to protect through Dhamma, to administer affairs according to Dhamma, to please the people with Dhamma, to guard the empire with Dhamma.”

Some specific reforms which Ashoka made in his wish to conquer the world by morality or dharma included tolerance and respect for others, even those with different religions and backgrounds, or, as the Twelfth Rock Edict stated, “other sects ought to be duly honoured in every case”; love of the family; compassion, which included respect for others, kindness even toward slaves and prisoners, “reverence toward elders, and gentleness to animals”; honesty; liberality toward relatives, friends, and neighbours; moderation and self-control, or as the Seventh Rock Edict said, “but even one who practised great liberality but did not possessed self-control, purity of mind, gratitude, and firm devotion, was very mean”.

10. Sastri; Asoka and His Successors, p. 235.
11. Thapar; Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas, p. 162.
12. Sastri; Asoka and His Successors, p. 235.
a system of social welfare, including medical centers for human beings and animals, the construction of roads for good communication, along with the digging of wells and the planting of trees for shade, and so on, all policies that he thought best carried out by the centralized administration of government; an unusual concern for the poor in rural areas, a concern that led him to tour the countryside frequently; and ahimsa or nonviolence, which prohibited both the slaughter and sacrifice of animals. According to V. R. R. Dikshitar, in the Sixth Rock Edict Ashoka said he was promoting dharma for “the common good of the world,” and in the Tenth Rock Edict, Ashoka stated plainly that he put forth the doctrine of dharma for “happiness in the next world.”

Many Indian historians are proud to embrace Kautilya’s Arthasastra as a practical book of rugged political realism—in instead of the impotent idealism of Plato—that actually shaped history. The work showed how the political world did work and not very often stating how it ought to work, a book that frequently disclosed to a king what calculating and sometimes brutal measures he must carry out to preserve the state and the common good. With the old order crumbling, with the Nanda kings having proved cruel and inept, with enemies on India’s borders, and with the threat of anarchy within, were not Kautilya’s harsh measures necessary and had not his critics failed to note the nature of the times in which he lived? In defense

13. Thapar; Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas, pp. 70, 152, 180, 158.
15. Sastri; Asoka and His Successors, p.237.
of Chandragupta and Kautilya, Bhargava says, “all kinds of means might have been considered necessary to restore peace with honor.”

In the world of international politics, it is only natural that nations interact with each other through dissension and force. A political realist typically argued that there would always be conflict in international relations and, in effect, rule by the strongest. Kautilya, in the boldest of his promised, claimed that one who knew his science of politics could conquer the world, that “one possessed of personal qualities, though ruling over a small territory . . . conversant with the science of politics, did conquer the entire earth, never lost.”

Kautilya did not see this conquest as something unjust. A king who carried out his duties, ruled according to law, meted out only just punishment, applied the law equally to his son and his enemy, and protected his subjects not only went to heaven but had conquered the earth up to its four ends.

Kautilya apparently meant by the phrase “conquering the world” something like conquering up to what Indians regarded as the natural borders of India, from the Himalayas all the way south to the Indian Ocean, and from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal, although Kautilya said, “the region of the sovereign ruler extends northwards between the Himavat and the sea, one thousand yojanas [about nine thousand miles!] in extent across.” As Kangle put it, in the Indian tradition, the world conqueror, or cakrava-rtin, was not one who

18. Bhargava; Chandragupta Maurya, p.102
22. Ibid., 9.1.18: 407.
conquered regions beyond the borders of India. In short, India did not include the land of “barbarians” or _mlecchas_, those outside of Indian culture. Cakra means wheel; it was possible that the Indian concept of the world conqueror involved someone who ruled as far as his chariots could roll, without obstacles or opposition. At any rate, surely Dikshitar is correct in saying that this ideal of a world conqueror in ancient India led to an “imperialism” that was “one of the causes of chronic warfare,” although the Mauryan dynasty did bring comparative peace for more than a century. As Narasingha Prosad Sil noted, “for Kautilya a world conquest was the true foundation for world peace.”

**Kautilya’s Views on Foreign Relations**

In order to determine the kind of policy to be adopted in each case, foreign rulers were classified by Kautilya under four heads, namely, enemies (_Ari_), friends (_Mitra_), mediators (_Madhyama_), and neutrals (_Udasma_). Inimical and friendly rulers, again, were each divided into two kinds, natural and artificial. A king and his immediate neighbour were, according to Kautilya, natural enemies to each other. Abul Fazl, describing the Hindu system of public administration,
said; “The Prince whose territory adjoined to his, although he might be friendly in appearance, yet ought not to be trusted; he was always be prepared to oppose any sudden attack from that quarter. A king who attempted to give trouble to another king without reasonable cause was an artificial enemy of that king.”

The ruler whose territory was separated from that of another ruler by the territory of an enemy, and whose friendship had come down from father and grand-father was a natural friend. The best kind of friend, according to Kautilya, was he who was constant, noble, straightforward, and whose friendship had been inherited from father and grandfather. A ruler whose friendship was courted for the sake of the protection of life and property was an acquired friend. The ruler whose territory was situated close to that of a king and his wicked enemy, and who was capable of helping both the kings or of resisting either of them, was a mediatory king. The ruler whose territory was situated between the territories of two rival kings, and who was powerful enough to help or resist either of them or a mediatory king, was neutral. The distinction between a neutral and a mediatory King was not at all clear. Perhaps, the term *Udasina* (neutral) was applied to a King who remained passive in regard to both the contending parties, while the ‘*Madhyama*’ King was one who exerted his influence to bring about a reconciliation. The third and fifth States form a *Madhyama,*” said Kautilya, “were likely to be friendly, and the second, fourth, and sixth States were likely to be

inimical to him. If the Madhyama king be on good terms with both these classes of States, a ruler had to be friendly with him; otherwise he was to ally himself with the second class of States.\textsuperscript{31}

The neighbouring kings belonged to one or other of four classes, namely, rearward enemy (parshnigraha), rearward friend (akranda), ally of a rearward enemy (parshnigrahasara), and ally of a rearward friend (akrandasara)\textsuperscript{32} lied next beyond the one last mentioned, he was to enter into alliance; but no connection was to be formed with those who are more remote. A great deal about Circles of States (mandala) in the literature of Ancient India is available. A Circle consisted of three kings, a ruler, his friend, and his friend’s friend. As each of these kings was supposed to possess six elements of State, namely, the king, minister, country, fort, treasury, and army. Thus a Circle consisted of eighteen elements. Foreign rulers being of four kinds, there were thus four primary Circles of States, twelve kings, and seventy-two elements of States.\textsuperscript{33} A powerful and wise king had always tried to make himself the centre (nabhi) of the Circle and to make the friendly powers the spokes of the wheel (nemi).\textsuperscript{34}

The attitude of a ruler towards foreign rulers depended upon the special circumstances of each case. He was supposed to adopt one or other of six sorts of policy, namely, peace (sandhi), war (vigraha), neutrality (asana), preparedness for war (yana), alliance (samsraya), and double dealing (dvaidhibhava).\textsuperscript{35}

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In Kautilya’s view expediency was to be the main consideration in foreign policy. “If a king,” said Kautilya, “was weaker than his neighbour, he had to adopt a peaceful policy; but if he was superior in strength to his rival he was to make war. That this policy actually governed the actions of statesmen for long ages was shown by the fact that Abul Fazl, writing in the sixteenth century, spoke of the foreign policy of the Hindus in these words “With those who were his equals in power, he took care to maintain peace and friendship, and from those who were weaker than himself he exacted tribute. If any monarch was more powerful than himself, he continually strived to sow dissension among his troops; and if he was not able to do this, prudently purchased his friendship.”36

When neither of the two is the superior of the other, both should be neutral. When one king was endowed with an excess of quality, he had to prepare for war; but if he was powerless, he had to make an alliance. If the circumstances be such that it was desirable to crush a rival, but this could only be done with the assistance of some other Power, then the king had to adopt a policy of double-dealing.37

The measures that were to be adopted by kings to carry into effect their foreign policy were four, namely: (i) conciliation (sama); (ii) making of gifts (dana); (iii) sowing of dissensions (bheda); and (iv) punishment (danda).

In view of the peculiar position of affairs in India in ancient times, alliances were regarded as a great necessity by most of the

37. Kautilya Arthasastra, Book VII, Chapter 1.
Powers. The purposes, however, for which alliances were made were various.

Sometimes, the object of an alliance was the joint acquisition of territory, or the colonisation of uninhabited tracts of country. More often, kings combined to crush a powerful rival. But in a large majority of cases, alliances were made for the purpose of defence against other Powers.  

Alliances were made either on equal terms (*samasadhi*) or on unequal terms (*hmasandhi*). The first kind was an alliance properly so called, because in this the positions of the two parties were equal, and the benefit was mutual. The second was a subordinate alliance, and from it one of the parties often derived more benefit than the other. The duties of a subordinate ally, were to appease public feeling, to collect allies and auxiliaries, to help the paramount sovereign in other ways, and to enable him to distinguish friends from disguised enemies. Alliances were made by means of treaties. A treaty was defined by Kautilya as that which binds kings in mutual faith.  

The observance of a treaty either depended upon the plighted word (*satya, sapatha*) or was enforced by means of sureties (*pratibhu*) and hostages (*pratigraha*). Very often, the word of honour was held sufficient; but sometimes ascetics and men who were considered powerful enough to influence the action of the government stood sureties for the fulfillment of treaty obligations. In case of an apprehension of a breach of faith, one party often required the other to swear by fire, water, gold, etc., and to send as hostages his relatives and children.

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According to the older teachers, a treaty made by word of honour was regarded as temporary (*calā*), while that supported by sureties or hostages was considered permanent (*sthavara*). But Kautilya dissented from this view and said: “a treaty dependent upon the plighted word was permanent, not only in this world, but also in the next, while a treaty depending upon a hostage or a surety was good only for this world. Truthful kings of old made treaties only with the words ‘we entered into agreement’.” In spite of this theory, the maintenance of a treaty was often found very difficult, and when there was any deviation from the terms on the part of one of the parties, it taxed to the full the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the statesman, whether they tried to restore the treaty or to break off friendly relations. Communications were kept up between the Courts of the different Powers through diplomatic agents. Even as early as the time of the Rig Veda, it was heard of envoys, but the practice of attaching diplomatic agents to foreign Courts could not have been established until much later times. There were various kinds of such agents, and their powers and responsibilities differed a great deal. Some were plenipotentiaries (*Nisrishtartha*), some ambassadors (*Duta*), some charge-d’affaires (*Parimitartha*), while the rest were mere conveyors of royal messages (*Sasana hara*). Plenipotentiaries had power to demand the observance of treaties, to declare war or conclude peace, and to issue ultimatums in emergent cases. Krishna, for example, was a plenipotentiary when he was sent by the

41. *Ibid*.
42. *Rig Veda*, II. 127, 9.
43. *Kautilya Arthasastra*, Book I, Chapter 16.
The ambassadors kept their own governments fully informed of the activities of the Court to which they were attached. They lived on terms of friendship with the great Officers-of-State, and acquainted themselves with all the affairs of the country. In particular, they made it their business to ascertain the number, size, and positions of the forts and military stations, the strength of the army, and the strong and weak points of the State. A Parimitartha was sent to a foreign court on a particular mission and possessed limited authority. The diplomatic agents of the inferior type took note of intrigues against the ruler, and supervised the work of the spies engaged in collecting information.

As the representative of a foreign power, an envoy enjoyed great privileges and immunities. The envoys were always courteously treated. As the responsibilities of an envoy were great, some care had to be taken in selecting the proper person. The following qualifications were essential for an ambassador: Loyalty to the King, freedom from vices, capacity, honesty, strength of character, eloquence, brilliance, forgiveness and high birth. Great stress used to be laid on the conduct of an ambassador at a foreign Court. He was expected to behave with dignity and courtesy, and to preserve the good name of the State which he represented. When on a mission to an enemy State it was the duty of the emissary to act with courage and resolution, and at the same time show moderation and tact.

44. Ibid; “In urgent cases the ambassadors have to act like ministers.”
45. Ibid
The maintenance of a balance of power was one of the problems in foreign politics which engaged the attention of the diplomats in ancient days. Kautilya insisted that a monarch should always take care that none of the other Powers grow either too strong or become too weak. Thus a King had always contemplated the balance of power among the twelve monarchs constituting the circle of foreign monarchs having dealings with his own government.

**Kautilya on Diplomacy**

Kautilya believed that nations acted in their political, economic and military self-interest. He thought that foreign policy or diplomacy will be practised as long as the self-interest of the State was served because every State acts in a way to maximize the power and self interest. He thought that the world was in such a state that a kingdom was either at war or was preparing for a war and diplomacy was yet another weapon used in this constant warfare. He believed that diplomacy is a series of actions taken by a kingdom such that it gains strength and eventually conquers the nation with which diplomatic ties were created. He also believed that treaties should be made in such a way that King benefits and serves the self-interest of the Kingdom. He did talk about violating treaties and creating dissension between states so that his kingdom might benefit which directly is similar to Bismarck’s strategies of treaties. In fact Kautilya could be compared to Bismarck that both of them thought of extremely complex network of treaties and relationships without any successor in either case. In his words he defined diplomacy as, “A King who understood the true implication of diplomacy conquers
the whole world”.\textsuperscript{46} To understand his concept of diplomacy it was important to understand the Mandala concept, six types of foreign policy. Here, mandala concept would be explained which is quite apt in today’s context.

**Six forms of Diplomacy**

Kautilya elaborated on strategies for not only the strong king and the aggressor but also explained the strategies a weak king had to follow to defend himself and protect the state. His forms of diplomacy also depended on the type of the king whether the policy was directed toward the superior, inferior or equal. He defined superiority or inferiority primarily on three dimensions: military power, economic power and geographical size. The six types of foreign policy that he advocated are:

1. *Sandhi*: This meant accommodation, which meant that kings sought to accommodate each other and did not resolve to hostile means. These *Sandhis* could be temporary or permanent and it depended on the environment and relative powers of the kings. *Sandhi* could be of five types: *Mitrasandhi*: With an ally on definite terms, *Hiranyasandhi*: Agreement based on transfer of wealth, *Bhoomisandhi*: Agreement based on transfer of land or territory, *Karmasandhi*: Agreement for exchange of military and *Anavasitasandhi*: Agreement to help colonize an unoccupied place. The various sub-forms in this *sandhi* had been practiced by statesmen later. Bismarck had used *Karmasandhi* with Austria and now Britain’s foreign policy had been to maintain *Anavasitasandhi* with the United States.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
2. **Vigraha**: This meant hostility shown to neighbour or a state. Kautilya strongly believed that the States were always at war and sought power hence it was necessary to had hostile foreign policy towards few States which were either equal in power or subordinate in power.

3. **Asana**: This meant indifference and he choose this policy for States which were neutral in his *mandala* concept of nations. He also believed that an indifferent foreign policy worked well in the case of equal power. One might not agree on this point as we had seen in case of equal powers in history, there had been always tension which either led to a war or an alliance. Germany viewed Britain as an equal power and could not be indifferent, neither could US be indifferent to Russia during the cold war.

4. **Dvaidhibhava**: This meant double policy which was very well practiced by Bismarck. Kautilya advocated this foreign policy for States which are superior militarily. Kissinger followed this strategy where he made alliance with China so that at no time Russia and China could become closer in ties than US and China. Kautilya advocated the same concept within his *Mandala* framework.

5. **Samsarya**: This policy of protection is followed where a stronger state intervenes and shelters a weak state. Kautilya advocated this policy when a stronger state needs a shield to protect itself from an equal power it was good to use this policy of protection for a third state and used this alliance to defend against the potential enemy. In one sense the colonization was followed where European powers started controlling weak nations in Africa and Asia and thus strengthening their position against one another.
6. **Yana**: This policy was to attack. Kautilya did mention that peace and stability in a state made the state even powerful but never shy away from attacking the weak and unjust king. He thought that an unjust king kept the society unhappy which made that state a potential target as it was weak due to social unrest. Who knows may George W. Bush read Kautilya before pursuing the *Yana* policy on Iraq!

Thus Kautilya’s foreign policy was formed by his strong belief in King and the state’s continuous thirst for power and wealth. His diplomacy tactics were also influenced by Hindu religion and the social structure which shaped his thinking in terms of types of foreign policies and their application.

He did not manifest any concrete vision for the Mauryan Empire. He proposed the *mandala* concept in war and diplomacy and created intricate web of relations but he did not predict an outcome for this empire. It was the good luck that the descendants of this Empire were even stronger kings and expanded the empire, else the fate would have been similar to what Bismarck faced in Europe.

Kautilya’s quality to manage war and diplomacy can greatly be admired. His six diplomacy tools and *mandala* concept is still applicable *albeit* the nations are now separated by oceans and there intercontinental ballistic missiles shrinking geographic effects on diplomacy. His work can be directly applied during the De Gaulle times, when there was a fear of Russia attacking the Western Europe and the tactics De Gaulle played were quite similar as proposed by Kautilya. Kautilya’s thinking has definitely shaped the future writings but it is to be wondered what happened to the Indian diplomacy and
policies of the statesmen of India. The strategies adopted by Kautilya were seldom applied when the Mughals invaded from the middle-east and later the British conquered India. The key question is can *Arthashastra* be applied in democracies or is it applicable only to autocracies. Plato, Aristotle, Kautilya and Machiavelli all advocated the rule of the king supreme and state as the ultimate power. In other words art of war and diplomacy is still applicable but one needs to realize that the social structures are changing faster than they did in earlier times. *Kautilya* ultimately sought peace but his means were war and thus believed that unless there was a world order where his kingdom was at the center and most powerful one could not attain peace. His note on statecraft is very clear which says, “A wise king trained in politics, will, even if he possesses a small territory, conquer the whole earth with the help of the best fitted elements of his sovereignty and will never be defeated.”47

**Diplomacy and Foreign Policy as Extensions of Warfare**

As a political realist, Kautilya assumed that every nation acted to maximize power and self-interest, and therefore moral principles or obligations had little or no force in actions among nations. While it was good to have an ally, the alliance would last only as long as it was in that ally’s as well as one’s own self-interest, because “an ally looked to the securing of his own interests in the event of similarity of calamities and in the event of the growth of the enemy’s power.”48

Whether one went to war or remained at peace depended entirely

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upon the self-interest of, or advantage to, one's kingdom. War and peace were considered solely from the point of view of profit.\textsuperscript{49} One kept an ally not because of good will or moral obligation, but because one was strong and could advance one's own self interest as well as the self-interest of the ally, for "when one had an army, one's ally remained friendly, or (even) the enemy become friendly."\textsuperscript{50}

Because nations always acted in their political, economic, and military self interest, even times of peace had the potential to turn abruptly into times of war, allies into enemies, and even enemies into allies. Burton Stein noted correctly that Kautilya was describing a foreign policy not of a great empire like that of the Mauryas, but of small warring states in incessant conflict, such as India experienced before the Mauryan empire.\textsuperscript{51}

Kautilya probably assumed that peaceful empires could last forever, and that conflict among smaller states was more common in history. For Kautilya, this principle of foreign policy—that nations act in their political, economic, and military self-interest—was a timeless truth of his science of politics, or \textit{arthasastra}. He did not believe that nations never act in an altruistic manner—indeed, Kautilya advocated humanitarian acts that also coincided with one's self-interest—but he did believe that one must assume, if entrusted with political or military power, that one's neighbours will eventually act in their own interests. In other words, one would be betraying one's own people

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  \item[49.] Kalidas Nag and V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar; "The Diplomatic Theories of Ancient India and the \textit{Arthashastra}," \textit{Journal of Indian History} 6, no. 1 (1927):15–35, see 15.
  \item[50.] Kautilya; \textit{Arthasastra}, 8.1.56: 389.
  \item[51.] Burton Stein, \textit{A History of India} (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 78.
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if one did not assume a worst-case scenario. A nation forced to rely on the kindness of neighbouring states was weak and, unless it could change rapidly, doomed to destruction.

Kautilya was most famous for outlining the so-called Mandala theory of foreign policy, in which immediate neighbours were considered as enemies, but any state on the other side of a neighbouring state was regarded as an ally, or, the enemy of my enemy was my friend. Imagine a series of states to one’s west, and then number them starting with oneself. States numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, and so on would likely be friends, whereas states 2, 4, 6, 8, and so on would probably be enemies. Kautilya put this basic principle in a number of different ways, but most simply as, “One with immediately proximate territory was the natural enemy.”

Elsewhere he stated this Mandala theory of foreign policy in more detail: “With respect to the middle king [he himself], the third and the fifth constituents were friendly elements. The second, the fourth, and the sixth were unfriendly elements.”

Kautilya assumed that he lived in a world of foreign relations in which one conquered. He did not say to himself, “prepare for war, but hope for peace,” but instead, “prepare for war, and plan to conquer.” Diplomacy was just another weapon used in the prolonged warfare that was always either occurring or being planned for.

After analyzing a king’s unique configuration of potential enemies and allies, Kautilya then boldly calculated how the king must think and act. “The king, endowed with personal excellences

and those of his material constituents, the seat of good policy, was the would-be conqueror. Encircling him on all sides, with territory immediately next to his was the constituent called the enemy. In the same manner, one with territory separated by one (other territory) was the constituent called the ally.”

It just repeats the principles of foreign policy, but then explains how Kautilya regarded neighboring states: “A neighboring prince possessed of the excellences of an enemy was the foe; one in calamity was vulnerable; one without support or with weak support was fit to be exterminated; in the reverse case, fit to be harassed or weakened. These were the different types of enemies.” When Kautilya wrote of “exterminating” an enemy, he meant killing only the nobles. He thought the best policy toward ordinary soldiers and subjects was to treat them well and recruit them.

Kautilya’s Mandala theory of foreign policy, was well analysed but made a mistake in labeling the Mandala theory an argument based on the doctrine of the balance of power. Kautilya, in fact, was not offering a modern balance of power argument. In the twentieth century, international relations theorists had defended the doctrine of the balance of power, because equally armed nations would supposedly deter each other, and therefore no war would be the result. This argument was found occasionally in Kautilya: “In case the gains of two allies of equal strength were equal, there should be peace; if unequal, war,” or, “the conqueror should march if superior

54. Ibid., 6.2.13: 318.
55. Ibid., 6.2.13: 318,
56. Ibid., 7.6.3: 338.
in strength, otherwise stay quiet.”\textsuperscript{57} Whereas these balance of power theorists suggested that a nation armed itself so that it could ensure peace, Kautilya wanted his king to arm the nation in order to find or create a weakness in the enemy and conquer, even to conquer the world, or at least the subcontinent of India. In reading \textit{Arthasastra}, no moral considerations other than a king doing what was right for his own people are found. Rather, it was discovered merely what Kautilya regarded as the nature of power. The king, he wrote, “should march when by marching he would be able to weaken or exterminate the enemy.”\textsuperscript{58} And Kautilya assumed that every other state would act in a like manner because “even the equal who had achieved his object tends to be stronger, and when augmented in power, untrustworthy; prosperity tended to change the mind.”\textsuperscript{59} Just as did Thucydides, Kautilya regarded a request for negotiations as a sign of weakness, indeed a desperate act of a weak nation trying to survive: “A weaker king might bargain with a stronger king with the offer of a gain equal to his troops, when he was in a calamity or was addicted to what was harmful [that is, women, wine, or gambling] or was in trouble. He with whom the bargain was made should fight if capable of doing harm to him; else he should make the pact.”\textsuperscript{60}

Kautilya argued that diplomacy is really a subtle act of war, a series of actions taken to weaken an enemy and gain advantages for oneself, all with an eye toward eventual conquest. A nation’s foreign

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 9.1.1: 406.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 9.1.44: 408.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 7.5.47: 337.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 7.7.7: 343.
\end{itemize}
policy had always to be consisted of preliminary movements toward war: “In this way, the conqueror had to establish in the rear and in front, a circle (of kings) in his own interest. . . . And in the entire circle, he should ever station envoys and secret agents, becoming a friend of the rivals, maintaining secrecy when striking again and again. The affairs of one, who could not maintain secrecy, . . . undoubtedly perish, like a broken boat in the ocean.” In Kautilya’s foreign policy, even during a time of diplomacy and negotiated peace, a king had still be “striking again and again” in secrecy.

Consider some of the measures Kautilya supported during times of peace. If opposed by an alliance of nations, a king should secretly “sow dissensions” within the alliance until one or more of the parties in the alliance becomes weak. When he had weakened a neighbour, the king “should violate the treaty.” Or, in another example, “The wise conqueror, making one neighboring king fight with another neighboring king, should seize the territory of another, cutting off his party on all sides.” In Kautilya’s view, two kinds of kingdoms confront any king— those weak kingdoms fit to be destroyed utterly and those strong kingdoms that, over a long period of time, one can only secretly harass and hope to weaken. He advised, “As between an enemy fit to be harassed and an enemy fit to be exterminated, acquisition of land from an enemy fit to be exterminated was preferable. For, the king fit to be exterminated, being without support or with a weak support, was deserted by his

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63. Ibid., 7.14.7: 367.
64. Ibid., 7.6.15: 339.
subjects when, on being attacked, he wishes to flee taking with him the treasury and the army."\textsuperscript{65} It was best to attack an enemy that was “disunited,” rather than an enemy in which the subjects had organized themselves into “bands.”\textsuperscript{66} During times of peace and negotiations, Kautilya wanted spies and secret agents to exploit the divisions within a country. Most countries, he maintained, had four kinds of unhappy subjects—the enraged, the frightened, the greedy, and the proud. Secret agents can widen and deepen these divisions by inciting these four types of people to act against their king. The opposing king “should win over the seducible in the enemy’s territories by means of conciliation and gifts and those not seducible by means of dissension and force.”\textsuperscript{67}

Because a king abided by a treaty only for so long as it was advantageous, Kautilya regarded all allies as future conquests when the time was ripe. He wrote, for example, “That ally who remained common to the enemy (and himself), he should divide that rogue from the enemy and when divided, exterminate him, thereafter (exterminate) the enemy.”\textsuperscript{68}

Kautilya also sought to take a nation trying to remain neutral or “in different” and secretly provoke war between that nation and a neighbouring kingdom, until the neutral nation sought his help. Then Kautilya’s king could “place him under his obligations.”\textsuperscript{69} Kautilya himself had no moral qualms about breaking obligations or trust:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 7.10.26–27: 354.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 7.11.18: 356.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 1.13.12, 1–11: 32.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 7.18.36: 383.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 7.18.37: 383.
\end{itemize}
That ally who might do harm or who, though capable, would not help in times of trouble, he should exterminate him, when trustingly, he came within his reach.\textsuperscript{70}

Because foreign policy was just an extension of a nation’s wars, the goal of foreign policy was not to end wars, but rather to ward off defeats and to make sure one was successful in subsequent warfare. For Kautilya, all ambassadors were potential spies with diplomatic immunity.\textsuperscript{71} Indeed, he had written about how to fight with the weapon of diplomacy.\textsuperscript{72}

**On War**

Kautilya thought there was a “science” of warfare, presumably part of a larger science of politics. The Commandant of the Army, he suggested, had to be trained in the science of all kinds of fights and weapons, and renowned for riding on elephants, horses or in chariots.\textsuperscript{73} Just as Machiavelli advised his prince to attend to matters of warfare constantly, so did Kautilya advised the king not to leave military matters entirely to others: “Infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants should carry out practice in the arts outside the city at sun-rise. . . . The king had constantly to attend to that, and should frequently inspected their arts.”\textsuperscript{74} Just as the king’s agents spied on officials in the state bureaucracy, so too must the king had spies to assess the loyalty of soldiers.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 7.18.40: 383.
\textsuperscript{71} Bimal Kanti Majumdar; *The Military System in Ancient India*, Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{72} Kautilya, *Arthasastra*; 12.2: 462; see Indra, *Ideologies of War and Peace in Ancient India*, pp. 80–81.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 2.33.9: 180.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 5.3.35–36: 304.
What greater threat is there to a king than having a military coup remove him from power? Kautilya recommended that “secret agents, prostitutes, artisans and actors as well as elders of the army should ascertain with diligence, the loyalty or disloyalty of soldiers.”

In his foreign policy, Kautilya wrote a startling sentence: of war, there is open war, concealed war and silent war. Open war was obvious, and concealed war was what otherwise called guerrilla warfare, but silent war was a kind of fighting. Silent war was a kind of warfare with another kingdom in which the king and his ministers—and unknowingly, the people—all act publicly as if they were at peace with the enemy kingdom, but all the while secret agents and spies are assassinating important leaders in the other kingdom, creating divisions among key ministers and classes, and spreading propaganda and disinformation. According to Kautilya, “Open war was fighting at the place and time indicated; creating fright, sudden assault, striking when there was error or a calamity, giving way and striking in one place, were types of concealed warfare; that which concerns secret practices and instigations through secret agents was the mark of silent war.” In silent warfare, secrecy was paramount, and, from a passage quoted earlier, the king could prevail only by “maintaining secrecy when striking again and again.” This entire concept of secret war was apparently original with Kautilya.

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75. Ibid., 5.3.47: 305.
76. Ibid., 7.6.17: 339.
77. Ibid., 7.6.40–41: 342.
78. Ibid., 7.13.43: 366.
Open warfare, Kautilya declared, was “most righteous, but he was willing to use any and all kinds of warfare to achieve consolidation and expansion of the kingdom. There was no question of morality here—other than the general good of one’s kingdom—but only of strategy. Kautilya advised the king that When he was powerful and superior in troops, when secret instigations were made (in the enemy’s camp), when precautions were taken about the season, and when he was on land suitable to himself, he should engage in an open fight. In the reverse case, he should resort to concealed fighting.”

Kautilya faced the situation in which one ruled a weak kingdom and was about to be attacked by a stronger king. He maintained that there were three kings who attack: the righteous conqueror, the greedy conqueror and the demoniacal conqueror. Whereas one could satisfy a righteous conqueror simply by submitting to his rule, one must surrender land and goods as well as money in order to satisfy a greedy conqueror. The demoniacal conqueror, however, would stop only when he had seized land, goods, sons, wives and life. Kautilya apparently saw himself as advising a righteous conqueror, although he did seek some lesson from defeated peoples. A weak king must give up everything if it was inevitable, but he must find a way to survive to fight another day. However, Kautilya did not advocate giving in to a conqueror without countermeasures and recommended

80. Kautilya, Arthasastra, 10.3.26: 440.
81. Ibid., 10.3.1–2: 438.
82. Ibid., 12.1.10: 460; see Nag and Dikshitar, “The Diplomatic Theories of Ancient India and the Arthashastra,” 28.
83. Ibid., 12.1.11–16: 460.
84. Ibid., 12.1.32: 462.
that the king used diplomatic or concealed warfare; attempted to conciliate his enemy with gifts; directed secret agents to wield weapons, poison or fire to destroy the enemy’s fort or camp; instructed secret agents to promote a coup by a pretender from his family or a prince in disfavour; send the demoniacal king elephants, which had been poisoned; gave to the enemy king treasonable or alien troops; surrendered to an entirely different king and gave him all except the capital city; had secret agents instigate a revolt among the subjects of the enemy king; employed assassins and poison-givers; used an astrologer to persuade a high officer of the enemy king to try a coup; commanded secret agents to declare that the Regent of the king was about to take power, while the agents killed leaders at night and blamed the murders on the Regent of the enemy king; used secret agents in the countryside to protest oppression of the enemy king’s bureaucracy and killed agents of the king hoping to start a revolt; or finally, set fire to palaces and stores of grain and blamed this on the Regent of the enemy king.

Kautilya often advocated using women as weapons of war. He certainly regarded women as a source of satisfaction for troops at war, and Kautilya certainly saw women as an addictive source of pleasure, worse than wine or gambling, that a good king must enjoy only in moderation. Precisely because women are such a powerful addiction, a king could use them against an enemy; for example, if a king was trying to undermine a ruling oligarchy, he had to make

85. Ibid., 12.17–32: 461–62; 12.2.8–33: 462–64; see also N. N. Law, “Dvaidhibhava in the Kautilya,” Indian Historical Quarterly 7 (1931): 253–58, see 258.
86. Ibid., 10.1.10: 434.
chiefs of the ruling council infatuated with women possessed of great beauty and youth. When passion was roused in them, they would start quarrels by creating belief about their love in one and by going to another.  

A woman supposedly in love with one leader would go to another, professed her love for him, urged him to murder the first leader, and then she would proclaim, my lover had been killed by so and so. Obviously such tactics created mistrust among leaders of an oligarchy and also brought about the death of key enemies. When many or two of the chiefs felt passion for one woman, assassins would create quarrels among them. Secret agents could destroy high officers in the enemy army either with poison or with love-winning medicines.

Speaking of justice to an enemy about to conquer was the last tactic of the weak. Kautilya depicted an envoy saying to the conquering king that he should accept a treaty and pay regard to his spiritual and material well-being; that conquering a kingdom willing to surrender on reasonable was an impious act; that battle was not in the conquering king’s self-interest, since to fight with brave men who had given up all hope of life was a rash deed and the conqueror would lose troops and material good; that such a conquest would only unite his enemies all the more; that the conquering king’s enemies were only waiting for him to be weakened in order to attack; that he himself was risking death; that war itself in which men on each side die was an impious act; and that he should not listen to

enemies masquerading as friends who were giving him false advice as to his real self-interest.\textsuperscript{91} Kautilya demonstrated the realities of diplomacy and war as well as the ineffectiveness of moral pleas when confronted by a superior power.

Machiavelli longed for the legions of ancient Rome. Kautilya wanted legions, but he wanted them preceded by elephants, which acted in the ancient world a bit like modern tanks. So valuable were they that Kautilya wrote, destruction of an enemy’s forces is principally dependent on elephants.\textsuperscript{92} Kautilya considered the treasury most valuable in raising an army, procuring equipment including elephants, and preparing for war. After the treasury and the army, Kautilya focused on the importance of the fort, on which depended “the treasury, the army, silent war, restraint of one’s own party, use of armed forces, receiving allied troops, and warding off enemy troops and forest tribes. In the absence of a fort, the treasury would fall into the hands of enemies. . . . those with forts were not exterminated.\textsuperscript{93} Kautilya was inconsistent in ranking the importance of the treasury, the army, and forts, but it seemed that the people, or a popular army, were the most important of all.\textsuperscript{94} Kautilya urged the king to be popular with the people and rely on the countryside. If weak in might, a king should endeavor to secure the welfare of his subjects. The countryside was the source of all undertakings; from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{92} Kautilya, \textit{Arthasastra}, 7.11.16: 356; see Arvind Kumar Srivastava, \textit{The Ancient Indian Army: Its Administration and Organization} (Delhi: Ajanta Publications,1985), 80–81.
\item \textsuperscript{93} \textit{Ibid.}, 8.1.38–40: 388.
\item \textsuperscript{94} \textit{Ibid.}, 7.15.11: 370.
\end{itemize}
them came might. Kautilya cautiously made a revolution in warfare, relying not quite as much on the warrior class of *kshatriyas*. India was divided into four classes or castes (*varnas*): *brahmins* or priests; *kshatriyas* or warriors and rulers; *vaishyas* or farmers and traders; and *shudras* or labourers. The *Dharmas-ultras*, or law codes, written before Kautilya, urged an army of *kshatriyas* and, in an emergency, also *brahmins* (priests) and *vaishyas* (farmers or merchants). Kautilýya was of the opinion that there was no use of *brahmin* troops—“by prostration, an enemy might won over Brahmana troops”—but he liked the energy, numbers, and strength of *shudras*, agricultural laborers treated much like serfs. Kautilya’s praise of ordinary men from the lower two *varnas* was unusual in the ancient world. He said as between land with the support of a fort and one with the support of men, the one with the support of men was preferable. For, a kingdom was that which has population. Without men, like a barren cow, nothing could be yield. According to Sharma, Kautilya alone holds that the army made up of *vaishyas* and *sudras* is important. Kautilya apparently believed that an army of *kshatriyas* was best; warriors were supposed to find their highest duty and pleasure by dying in battle and as much as one-

99. Sharma; *Sudras in Ancient India*, p.237.
fifth of the population under Chandragupta’s empire were warriors or *kshatriyas*. In addition, Kautilya clearly argued that sections of the army should consist mostly of persons from the same region, caste or profession.

A king’s power, for Kautilya, was in the end tied to the power and popular energy of the people, without which a king could be conquered, for not being rooted among his subjects, a king became easy to uproot. Although Kautilya wrote of using money to raise an army and even of purchasing heroic men, he was not advocating mercenaries who fought only for pay, but he was merely outlining the cost of paying, supplying, and feeding soldiers. He believed that “hereditary troops are better than hired troops;” in other words, troops made of men born in the kingdom and thus loyal to the king since birth were better than strangers fighting for money.

**Which States to be Attacked**

In Kautilya’s view of the world, expansion by a prosperous kingdom was inevitable, natural, and good, and as a consequence, moral considerations did not enter into his deliberations, only what was for the good of the kingdom. If a king could win, then he had to wage a war. As Kangle said, the *Arthasastra* preached an ideal of conquest. But who was to be attacked? The decision took only

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careful calculation and observed the principle that a king had to attack weakness. Certain states were vulnerable. If a state was unjust, then its people would welcome a deliverer from a tyrannical king; if a kingdom was weakened from a poor economy, or if a state had experienced some kind of calamity ranging from fires to flood or famine, then a king should make war. As Rajendra Prasad said, Kautilya believed that whenever an enemy king was in trouble, and his subjects were exploited, oppressed, impoverished and disunited, he had to be immediately attacked after proclamation of war."

Every adjacent kingdom was looked upon as an enemy and classified. If a kingdom is strong, Kautilya called it a “foe”; if a kingdom was suffering calamity, then it was vulnerable; if a kingdom had weak or no popular support, then it was fit to be exterminated.” Even if one could not attack a strong neighbor or “foe,” one could harass it silently and weaken it over time. What Kautilya called an enemy fit to be exterminated was an enemy with little or no popular support, an enemy whose subjects quite likely would desert to Kautilya’s attacking army. Kautilya argued, or perhaps assumed, that imperial expansion was the correct goal: After conquering the enemy’s territory, the conqueror should seek to seize the middle king, after succeeding over him, the neutral king. This was the first method of conquering the world. . . . And after conquering the world he should enjoy it divided into varnas . . . in accordance with his own duty.”

108. Kautilya; Arthasastra, 7.4.15: 332–33.
110. Kautilya; Arthasastra, 6.2.16: 318.
111. Ibid., 7.10.26–27: 354.
In Kautilya’s mind, treaties were agreements between kingdoms of roughly equal power, agreements a king should break if they were no longer advantageous, and thus, believing that a treaty will provide a wall of protection against a strong enemy would be a foolish act. If an ally with whom a king had a treaty became weakened, that was, if the treaty was no longer to a king’s advantage, then the king had violated the treaty, or, when after making a pact he intended to violate it, ... he demanded a gain not received or more. Because Kautilya thought that promises or agreements were strategies and not moral obligations, he had no moral qualms about violating a promise and recommended that The commander of a frontier fort, by offering the surrender the fort, should get part of the (enemy’s) troops inside and destroy [them] when full of trust. To protect his own people, a king had an obligation to weaken or destroy any potential enemy: “That ally who might do harm or who, though capable, would not help in times of trouble, he should certainly exterminate him, when trustingly, he came within his reach.” Charles Drekmeier is certainly correct in saying that, “In outlining military campaigns Kautilya disregarded the traditional humanitarian principles laid down to regulate the conduct of war.” Kautilya listed various hindrances to gain; among them were pity, piousness, and regard for the other world. In short, in waging war, compassion

114. Ibid., 7.8.8: 347.
115. Ibid., 12.5.25: 472, my emphasis.
116. Ibid., 7.18.40: 383, my emphasis.
118. Kautilya; Arthasastra, 9.4.25: 419.
and morality and religious principles had no place, unless they were useful for bringing victory.

In another way, moral considerations did enter into Kautilya’s calculations. Whereas it was best to wage war against an unjust king who had no public support, it was wise to avoid war with a righteous king whose subjects would fight energetically on his behalf. Kautilya noted that if one had a choice about where to attack, it was always best to attack an unjust kingdom, because the subjects helped the king who had justly behaved.

Therefore, a king should march only against an enemy with disaffected subjects.\(^{119}\) Once more, morality was sometimes advantageous and in one’s self-interest, for “the unjustly behaved king would cause even settled land to be laid waste.”\(^{120}\) By being unjust, a king lost all popular support, thereby weakening the kingdom and making it easily conquered. If a king had a choice of attacking a strong king who was unjust or a weak king who was just, he had actually attacked the stronger king, because the stronger king's subjects, weary of injustice, would not help the strong king and might even join the war against him.\(^{121}\) An unjust state was really two states, already at war with one another, the rulers and the ruled.\(^{122}\) Kautilya paused to remind a king how practical it was to be just toward his subjects because subjects, when impoverished, become greedy; when greedy they become disaffected; when disaffected they


\(^{120}\) *Kautilya*, *Arthasastra*, 7.11.31: 358.

\(^{121}\) *Ibid.*, 7.5.16–18: 335.

\(^{122}\) Harit Krishna Deb; *The Kautil-iya Arthasastra on Forms of Government*, *Indian Historical Quarterly* 14 (June 1938): 366–79, see 370.
either went over to the enemy or themselves killed the master. Therefore, a king should not allow these causes of decline, greed and disaffection among the subjects to arise, or, if arisen, should immediately counter-act them. A domestic political policy of social justice was, in the long run, the best defense against outside enemies, because one attacking a righteous king was hated by his own people and by others; one attacking an unrighteous king was liked by them.

Kautilya maintained that a humanitarian policy toward a defeated people was practical. If a king massacred those whom he had defeated, then he frightened all those kingdoms that surround him and terrified even his own ministers. Rather, one gained more land and treated the defeated in a magnanimous manner. Certainly a conquering king had silently killed those former advisers and leaders loyal to the defeated king, but those who approached him promising loyalty were be treated generously. He need not to use towards them insults, injuries, contemptuous words or after promising them safety, he favoured them like a father. Because a conquering king intended to expand his territory and acquired new subjects, he must treat a defeated people well. Indeed, the conquering king had ordered the release of all prisoners and render help to the distressed, the helpless and the diseased. It was sound

123. Kautilya; *Arthasastra*, 7.5.27–28: 335.
military policy to establish a righteous course of conduct.\textsuperscript{128} What was moral was once more practical. Just as one could kill a traitor, but could use force against a multitude of people,\textsuperscript{129} so one could kill the intellectual men of a defeated kingdom, but had to bring the great majority of the citizens peacefully into one’s own kingdom. In this instance, Kautilya was following the traditional advice given in the \textit{Dharmas-utras} that Aryans condemned the killing of those who had thrown down their weapons, who had dishevelled hair, who folded their hands in supplication, or who were fleeing.\textsuperscript{130} And by these actions, Kautilya fitted his own definition of a righteous conqueror who sought victory and the submission of the enemy, but not greedy pillaging or lawless killing.\textsuperscript{131}

Kautilya demanded much of his soldiers, because they had to be brave and fierce in battle, but gentle and kind toward those whom they had defeated: When attacking the enemy’s fort or camp, they were granted safety to those fallen down, those turning back, those surrendering, those with loose hair, those without weapons, those disfigured by terror and to those not fighting.\textsuperscript{132} After a king had subdued the country and taken care of the people, he should grant safety to the countryside, settled subjects down to farm the land, and induced even those who had fought against him to settle down

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 13.5.14: 492.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 9.6.2–5: 422.
\textsuperscript{132} Kautilya, \textit{Arthasastra}, 13.4.52: 490.
and farm (even by giving tax exemptions), all because the countryside needed farmers and the new kingdom wanted prosperity. According to Kautilya, there is no country without people and no kingdom without a country, meaning a prosperous—not a ravished—countryside.\footnote{Ibid., 13.4.2–5: 485–86.}

A general should always give an enemy the hope of escape and never surrounded a nearly defeated enemy completely.\footnote{“To a surrounded enemy you must leave a way of escape. . . . Show him there is a road to safety, and so create in his mind the idea that there is an alternative to death. . . . Wild beasts, when at bay, fight desperately. How much more is this true of men! If they know there is no alternative they will fight to the death.” (SunTzu, \textit{The Art of War}, trans. Samuel B. Griffith [London: Oxford University Press, 1963], 109–10.)} Enemy soldiers who had hope of living will eventually run as it was necessary, to be careful not to bring the enemy into utter despair. Kautilya argued, to let the enemy soldiers know that the king would be generous in victory, would allow defeated soldiers to return to their land, and would take no reprisals except toward the leaders of the opposing kingdom, against whom he should act as in ‘the infliction of (secret) punishment’.\footnote{Kautilya, \textit{Arthasastra}, 9.6.5: 422.} After such humanitarian policies toward the defeated populace had become widely known, ordinary enemy soldiers would surrender in great numbers. By contrast, if a king announces that he would massacre every soldier, then all would fight to the death. He advised that to fight with brave men who had given up all hope of life was a rash deed.\footnote{Ibid., 10.2.4: 462.}

A conquering king had reassured a defeated people that not much, except their rulers, would change. The king who had
triumphed should adopt a similar character, dress, language and behavior as of the subjects. He had shown the same devotion in festivals in honour of deities of the country, festive gatherings and sportive amusements.\textsuperscript{137} He had kept his promises, especially to those who helped him win, he should honor the local deities, and he distributed make grants of land and money to men distinguished in wisdom and piety.\textsuperscript{138} And the conquering king had shown his goodwill toward the defeated by instituting a righteous custom, not initiated before because of the fear.\textsuperscript{139} While the victorious king was reassuring general population with generous policies, he continued to kill anyone who was dangerous and those who were disgruntled. He had put down by silent punishment those capable of injuring [him] or those brooding on the master’s destruction.\textsuperscript{140} In what might be a surprising observation about those whom the king had killed, Kautilya commented that if one must kill a dangerous person, the king must leave his property for his family.\textsuperscript{141}

John of Plano Carpino, a contemporary of Genghis Khan, described one of his tactics this way: “If it happens that the enemy fight well, the Tartars make a way of escape for them; then as soon as they begin to take flight and are separated from each other they fall upon them and more are slaughtered in flight than could be killed in battle.” Property untouched and “shall not covet the land,

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 13.5.7–8: 491.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 13.5.11, 6: 491–92.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 13.5.24: 493.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 13.5.17: 492.
property, sons or wives of the slain one."\textsuperscript{142} Kautilya had the same insight into human emotions that Machiavelli had nearly eighteen hundred years later he said, “And when the king was obliged to take the life of any one, . . . he must abstain from taking the property of others, for men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony.\textsuperscript{143}

A king becomes hated more readily for taking the property that belongs to a family than for killing the head of the family.

**Using Secret Agents, Assassins, Disinformation, and Propaganda**

Kautilya was ready to use almost any means of violence in fighting a war, although he wanted his king to direct his violence toward high officials of the enemy kingdom and not toward ordinary people. For example, Kautilya discussed at length how to employ poison, but almost directed its use at key enemy commanders. He advised that when giving unadulterated wine to the army chiefs, the secret agent should give them wine mixed with poison when they were in a state of intoxication.”\textsuperscript{144} Whereas Kautilya did suggest that an army laying siege to a fort try to defile the water,\textsuperscript{145} this measure seems designed to make those in the fort surrendered from illness, not to kill everyone in the fort.

Kautilya was willing to use any possible means to assassinate an enemy king—drowned him, burnt him with fire, suffocated him.

\textsuperscript{142} Kautilya, *Arthasastra*, 7.16.26: 374.
\textsuperscript{144} Kautilya, *Arthasastra*, 12.4.6: 467.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 13.4.9: 486.
with smoke, or even used crocodiles as assassins, not to mention employing women and children as poison-givers.\textsuperscript{146} The wonder of assassination, according to Kautilya, was that it was so efficient, “for, an assassin, single-handed, might be able to achieve his end with weapon, poison and fire. He did the work of a whole army or more.”\textsuperscript{147} In an unrealistic passage in the \textit{Dharmasutras} that Kautilya most certainly ignored, and directed that a king had not to strike with barbed or poisoned weapons!\textsuperscript{148}

Aside from assassination, another method used to defeat an enemy without full-scale battle was to arrange for the enemy to quarrel and fight among itself. It had already been seen how Kautilya intended to use beautiful women to instigate fights among high officers or officials. If the promise of pleasure could ignite quarrels, so could the promise of power. One had to arrange for a secret agent, disguised as an astrologer, to tell a high officer that he has all the marks of a king, and similarly arrange for a female secret agent, the wife of this officer, to complain that the king wanted to keep her in his harem. A third secret agent who was a cook or a waiter should lie, saying that the king had ordered him or her to poison the high officer. Thus with one or two or three means,” according to Kautilya, the king should incite the high officers one by one to fight or desert” the enemy king.\textsuperscript{149}

In a discussion about sowing dissensions among oligarchies, Kautilya suggested that assassins should start quarrels by injuring objects, cattle or men at night, should stir up for princes enjoying low comforts...
with (a longing for) superior comforts,” and should start quarrels among the followers of the chiefs in the oligarchy by praising the opponents in brothels and taverns.\(^{150}\) The goals were constantly to sow discord and to foment and inflame “mutual hatred, enmity and strife.\(^{151}\)

Much of this advice violated the tacit code of war found in the great Indian epics. The assassination of envoys and the use of poison were considered to be against the rules of warfare and thus not honorable. *The Laws of Manu* explained that while fighting in battle, the king should not kill his enemies with weapons that are concealed, barbed, or smeared with poison or whose points blaze with fire.\(^{152}\) Spies were common in Indian history, not spies who assassinated enemy officials and started quarrels among enemy leaders.\(^{153}\) An excellent book on warfare in ancient India discusses spies, but does not mention secret agents.\(^ {154}\) Once more Kautilya judged the means by the result, and the result he sought was the general good of his kingdom.

Another military tactic that Kautilya praised was what now is called disinformation or propaganda designed to demoralize or frighten enemy soldiers. For example, secret agents had appeared as messengers to troops saying, “Your fort had been burnt down or captured; a revolt by a member of your family had broken out; or,

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 11.1.14, 9, 8: 455.
\(^{151}\) Ibid., 11.1.6: 455.
\(^{152}\) The Laws of Manu, 137.
your enemy or a forest chief- tain had risen against you.” After spreading the rumor that the Regent or a high administrator of the enemy king had announced that the king was in trouble and might not come back alive and thus people should take wealth by force and killed their enemies, secret agents should kill and steal at night, trying to cause civil upheaval: “When the rumour has spread far and wide, assassins should rob citizens at night and slay chiefs.” Then they were to put bloody evidence in the Regent’s residence. Again, secret agents spreaded rumors, always in a confidential manner, that the king was furious with such and such a leader.

Kautilya was especially fond of the tactic of utilizing disinformation to flatter a second or third son and thus persuade him to try a coup against his own family. Convinced that disinformation could also inspired his own troops, Kautilya wanted agents to announce fabricated victories and fictitious defeats of the enemy. Much of this disinformation made use of religion. Placed strategically, astrologers “should fill the king’s side with enthusiasm by proclaiming his omniscience and association with divine agencies, and should fill the enemy’s side with terror.” Once more the needs of the state were primary, and the king commanded religion to serve the state: He made Brahmins recite blessings invoking victory and securing heaven. Singers and poets described the attainment of

heaven by the brave and the absence of heaven for cowards. Secret agents who had infiltrated the enemy side had used animal blood in order to “cause an excessive flow of blood from honoured images of deities,” and then interpreted that as a sure sign of future defeat for the enemy. Kautilya wanted anyone associated with religion or superstition—soothsayers, interpreters of omens, astrologers, reciters of Puranas and so on—to proclaim to his own troops and to the enemy the king’s association with divinities or “his meeting with divinities,” creating confidence on his own side and simultaneously terror and misgivings among enemy soldiers. Those priests in charge of interpreting omens must make certain that dreams and other signs are always favorable to the king’s efforts and unfavorable to the enemy. Every kind of superstition could be useful. And for Kautilya, religious authorities must be for hire. In addition to brave and well-equipped soldiers, warfare required deception, and over and again Kautilya advocated the above measures and more for deceiving both his own and the enemy troops. If caught behind enemy lines, Kautilya outlined ways for one to escape “in the disguise of a heretical monk,” “decked out as a corpse,” or “wearing a woman’s garb.” And he was eager to terrify the enemy by such multiple and varied means as by using “machines, by the employment of magical

161. Ibid., 10.3.43: 441.
162. Ibid., 13.2.27: 479.
163. Ibid., 13.1.7: 475
164. Ibid., 13.1.1, 8: 474–75.
165. Ibid., 13.1.9: 475.
and mystical practices, through assassins slaying those engaged in something else, by magical arts, by a show of association with divinities, through carts, by frightening with elephants,” and so on.\textsuperscript{168} A favourite tactic in battle was to pretend to be defeated, retreat in apparent disorder, and then attack a disorganized and unsuspecting enemy. At all times, Kautilya wanted his king to use deception, play roles, and create appearances. He advised not to risk heavy losses or even defeat in battle if deception and assassination could weaken or even defeat the enemy? Even if a king was forced to surrender in order to survive, Kautilya wanted him to pretend that his surrender was an excellent thing until he was clever or strong enough to fight back.\textsuperscript{169} Warfare was violent, but it also called for one who could calmly create false impressions, like a poker player.

**Manu and Kautilya’s Views on Interstate Relations**

The influence of the neighbouring states on the functioning of a state necessitates the study of interstate relations. Prof. Chatterjee observed, ‘relations among states in ancient India was taken for granted. It was rather the rule than the exception. States were convinced that they could not remain in isolation, even if they so liked, and this conviction made such intercourse somewhat unavoidable.’\textsuperscript{170} Manu laid down that a king did not prosper so much by gaining gold and treasury as by obtaining a friend. He further added that friends though a weak one, was greatly praised who was righteous, grateful, whose subject were contented, who was loyal

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 10.6.48-50: 453.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 7.15.29: 372.
\textsuperscript{170} Chatterjee, H.L., *International Law and Interstate Relations in Ancient India*, p. 7
and who pursued the work up to its completion. Thus a friend in the form of a neighbour or distant king was very essential for a king.

Therefore, Manu had explicitly expounded the theory of Rajamandala (circle of states). He laid down that on the conduct of the middlemost (Madhyama), on the doings of him who sought conquest (Vijigisu), on the behaviour of the neutral king, (Udasina) and on that of the foe (satru), let him sedulously meditate. These four constituents (Prakrti) formed foundation of the circle of neighbours; besides eight others were enumerated in the institutes of polity and thus the total was declared to be twelve. The minister, the kingdom, the fortress, the treasury and the army were five other constituent elements of the circle for these were mentioned in connection with each of the first twelve: thus the whole circle consisted briefly speaking of seventy two constituent parts. Let the king considered hostile his immediate neighbour and the partisan of such a foe; as friendly, the immediate neighbour of his foe; as neutral, the king beyond these two. Thus this theory contemplated a system of state bounded hostile, friend or natural relations with an ambitious potentate as its central figure.

171. Manu. 7; 208-209
172. Manu. 7, 155-158: Misra (Sudama), Jaanpada State In Ancient India, p. 169-70. Dikshitar (V.R.R.), War in Ancient India, pp. 310-11, Speilman (J.W.), Political Theory of Ancient India, p. 158. The author says, 'There is no accurate information as to the origin of the theory. It does not appear in the Vedic and Brahmana literature. But it is given in considerable details in the Arthasastra and is also mentioned in the Mahabharata. Our estimate is that this theory is probably no earlier than about 500 B.C. and may be one of the theoretical conclusion of the struggle for power between kingdom of Northern India which culminated in the Mauryan empire.'
Thus Rajmandala (circle of states) theory was the foundation of the foreign policy of the kings. One who was desirous of victory should overcome all the enemies by means of the four expedients, conciliation and the rest employed either singly or conjointly or by bravery and policy alone.\(^{174}\) King knew the secret of his enemies but concealed own secret policies from them. He was to cover his secrets and seven elements of state like the tortoise. He was to plan his undertakings (patiently meditating) like a heron; or like a lion, let him put forth his strength; like a wolf, let him snatch his prey; like hare, let him double in retreat.\(^{175}\) Manu referred to three kings viz., sarna, uttama and madhyama, but did not explain these terms.\(^{176}\) The enemy who was intelligent, of noble race, brave charitable, clever grateful and firm was considered to be the most dangerous enemy. Without neglecting him, he was to make peace with such an enemy.\(^{177}\) The madhyama is explained by Medhatithi as a king whose territory was close to that of Vijigisu. According to Kulluka madhyama was one whose territory was co-terminus with that of the Vijigisu and who was capable of helping both of them when they were united and who was capable of resisting them individually when they were not combined.\(^{178}\) So the Vijigisu tried to win over the madhyama. Law opined, “The madhyama was thus a stronger power intermediate

\(^{174}\) Manu. 7, 159: Medhatithi and Kulluka define a Vijigisu as the king who has the subjects loyal to him and who has made up his mind to conquer certain part of the world on account of his being possessed of courage, and strength. He seems to be the overlord of the states of the circle.

\(^{175}\) Manu. 7, 105-6.

\(^{176}\) Ibid., 7,87.

\(^{177}\) Ibid., 7,210.

\(^{178}\) Medhatithi and Kulluka on Manu. 7, 155.
between the Vijigisu on the one hand and the Udasina on the other. Both these were states of higher grades of strength.\textsuperscript{179}

The Udasina was described by Manu as a king who was beyond the enemy and his neighbour.\textsuperscript{180} Medhatithi defined it as a king capable of containing each of the two, vijigisu and his enemy singly but not conjointly and also each of these three vijigisu, madhyama and udasina singly but not conjointly.\textsuperscript{181}

According to Kulluka, an Udasina was one who was capable of helping Vijigisu and madhyama when they were in alliance and was capable of resisting them singly when they were not combined.\textsuperscript{182} Dikshitar hold that in the territory of an Udasina, peace always prevailed and thus showed that an Udasina was an indifferent king. Spellman was inclined to explain Udasina as a neutral king who was beyond the territories of any of the above kings.\textsuperscript{184} Chatterjee did not subscribe to the view of Spellman as he thought that neutrality was an attitude related to the continuation of previous existing state. This was supported by the use of nirapeksya by Kulluka.\textsuperscript{186} The qualities of an Udasina were knowledge of men, bravery, compassion, constant liberality.\textsuperscript{187} He pursued a policy of non-intervention accepted by the Rajamandala.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{179} Law, N.N.: Interstate relations in ancient India, pp. 12-13.  
\textsuperscript{180} Manu: 7,158.  
\textsuperscript{181} Medhatithi: 7,158.  
\textsuperscript{182} Kulluka: 7, 155.  
\textsuperscript{183} V.R.R. Dikshitar; op. cit., p. 131  
\textsuperscript{184} J.W. Spellman; Political Theory of Ancient India, p. 152  
\textsuperscript{185} H.L. Chatterjee; op. cit., p. 131.  
\textsuperscript{186} Kulluka on, 7, 155.  
\textsuperscript{187} Manu. 7,211.  
\textsuperscript{188} Dikshitar. op. cit., pp. 32 1-22.
The Vijigisu had always to guard his allies and others against possible enemy attack because their destruction would eventually lead to the ruin of his own kingdom. He was to secure his back before undertaking an expedition. The parsnigraha (the heel-catcher) might be hostile to him and might try to invade his kingdom during his absence.

Thus a country had to arrange her relations with other countries in such a manner that its allies and foes were so interspersed around that at no time she was rendered helpless. In the event of one country being invaded, there were always friends and allies to oppose the invasions for the purpose of safeguarding their own interests. Defence to one country was aggression to another. Hence the ancient Indian political thinkers had unanimously praised the importance of mandala theory.

**Six measures of the Royal Policy**

The six-fold royal policy was natural corollary to the theory of Rajamanala. According to Ghoshal, if the former reflected the schematic grouping of states after the pattern of interstate relations in post-Vedic times, the latter expressed with thorough adherence to formal rules, the wide range of those relations. Manu enjoined upon a king to mediate upon the six measures of royal policy viz.,

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189. Medhatithi on. 9, 295-96.
190. Manu.7,207.
191. M. Bhandari; *op. cit.*, p. 357-58; V.P. Upadhyaya; Prachrna Bharate antarastriya sambandha, an unpublished thesis. The author says: Still the theory of statal-circle is not a static rule and has to be adopted according to the exigencies at a particular hour.
Sandhi (alliance), Vigraha (diplomatic war), Yana (preparedness for attack), Asana (maintenance of a post against the enemy), Dvaidhebhava (double-dealing), Sarilsraya (seeking protection). He had to follow this policy after taking into account his profits and losses.

Sandhi (an alliance) which yielded present and future advantages was of two kinds viz., that when one marches together with an ally and the contrary when the allies act separately.\textsuperscript{193} According to Medhatithi and Kulluka, Sandhi meant making presents of gold and other things with a view to secure the goodwill of both the parties and opposite of this was vigraha.\textsuperscript{194} The Samanakarma (alliance) referred alliance for a common enterprise to be undertaken by the joint strength of the two or more powers whereas the latter referred to an alliance where common counsel was essential though the enterprise might be different.\textsuperscript{195}

Manu defined vigraha as a diplomatic contest first and recommended the use of force only for the stronger king, whose victory might be assured in war on account of his superior force.\textsuperscript{196} The law-giver mentioned broad divisions of vigraha (war): firstly that which arose due to the carelessness or weakness of the enemy and secondly that which came about due to the insult of the ally and was resorted to, to avenge that insult.

Asana was also of two types viz, holding to the post due to lack of means or holding to the post due to the pressure of the allies in face of the enemy.\textsuperscript{197} It is prescribed both for weak and strong kings.

\textsuperscript{193} Manu. 7, 160-63.
\textsuperscript{194} Medhatithi and Kulluka. on 7, 160.
\textsuperscript{195} Manu.7,163.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.,7, 198-200.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 7, 164-66.
The policy of Asana as such was a diplomatic move to defeat or harass or set at naught the manoeuvours of the enemy.\textsuperscript{198} Medhatithi and Kulluka explained this term as ignoring the enemy. Medhatithi holds that it also meant withdrawing of one self.\textsuperscript{199}

The Manusmriti classified Yana (attack) into two categories viz, to attach the enemy at once in the adversity or to take the help of the ally and then attack.\textsuperscript{200} Again Manu mentioned types of Samsraya (seeking of protection or friendship). The first consisted in taking the help of a strong monarch on being pressed by the enemies. The second consisted the spreading of news of the help of a powerful monarch on the apprehension of trouble from the enemy. Thus it was used to contain the evil intentions of the enemies. The last ingredient of diplomacy was also divided into two categories: (i) to keep the armies in accordance with the wishes of the Senapati at one place in order to meet the end of the state and (ii) to occupy some other fort with a fraction of the forces probably to impress on the enemy, the existence of strained relation between the king and the commander-in-chief.\textsuperscript{201}

The Four-fold Expedients (Upayas) Success in undertakings, according to Manu, rested on both fate and human efforts, yet fate could not accomplish anything without human efforts.\textsuperscript{202} The king had to accomplish his mission by the proper and timely application of the fourfold expedients of diplomacy. Through these expedients,
he could conquer his foes and subjects. These expedients were sama (conciliation), dana (giving of gifts or presents i.e. compromise), bheda (causing dissension) and danda (force). These were the cardinal constituents of the ancient system of diplomacy.

Medhatithi and Kulluka defined sama as friendly meetings, sitting together, conversing, seeing each other’s wife and so forth. Thus friendliness would accomplish the tasks of a king.

Dana (gift) meant presentation of gold and other things as token of affection for the purpose of creating actual attachment. Kulluka included in the list of gifts, the elephants, horses and chariots etc. Sometimes this could be used to win over certain important persons attached with the foes. Of these the sarna (conciliation) and the danda were considered to be superior. But danda (force) was to be employed in extreme cases. In comparison to the above mentioned two instruments of diplomacy, dana was considered less important. As the expedient of Bheda (sowing dissension) involved all sorts of fair and foul play on the part of the king employing it, so Manu underrated importance. Actually, it was applied to weaken the enemy. It could be internal and external both. But for its success it depended hard labour, perseverance and keen foresight on the part of the king employing it. In fact it would be profitable expedient in the case of a righteous but conquering king where the Ksatriya ideals would not allow even the weaker side to refrain from war and subsequent destruction. Kulluka explained bheda as winning over the subjects.

203. Ibid., 7, 109.  
204. Medhatithi and Kulluka on 7, 198.  
205. Manu.7, 201-3.  
206. Ibid., 7, 109.  
207. Ibid., 7, 87.
and the followers of the enemy king. Medhatithi on the other hand explained it as winning over the family members of the person desired to be won over. He further added that those members of the foe’s family who are angry with him and who are desirous of obtaining his kingdom are alienable and the act of alienation consists in estranging depends upon their chief and inciting them to achieve their own purpose at the cost of the latter.\textsuperscript{208} Danda (use of force) was the fourth means of diplomacy. Danda might be called diplomatic war, not actually an armed conquest, rather it was the last resort before actual adoption of fighting.\textsuperscript{209} Blockade, boycott, refusal of the right of passing and so on were the means of pressuring, other than war. Hence physical, moral or economic pressures might be called Danda.\textsuperscript{210} Manu allowed use of Danda when the other means failed achieve the desired result.\textsuperscript{211} Medbatithi held that everything was accomplished by danda and Kulluka asserted the use of danda made success sure.\textsuperscript{212} Manu enjoined upon a king to conquer his enemies by prowess (paurusa) and polity (niti).\textsuperscript{213} But Medhatithi explained these words as conciliation and use of force.\textsuperscript{214} But since victory was doubtful, fighting was to be avoided and resorted to as a last resort.\textsuperscript{215} The king was expected to fight vigorously when victory was uncertain and equally possible for both the sides. But Medhatithi advised the king to retreat when victory appeared doubtful whereas Kulluka

\textsuperscript{208} Kulluka and Medhatithi on 7, 198.
\textsuperscript{209} S. Misra, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{211} Manu.7,109.
\textsuperscript{212} Medhatithi and Kulluka on Manu. 7, 109.
\textsuperscript{213} Manu. 7, 159.
\textsuperscript{214} Medhatithi on Manu. 7, 159.
\textsuperscript{215} Manu. 7, 198-99.
permitted to take such a step only when defeat was certain. But was not always the case that he who attained victory was the stronger of the two combatants or the defeated was necessarily the weaker one. Thus victory was uncertain and hence war should be avoided and other means be preferably employed. Manu advised the king to use danda slowly and not hurriedly.

By using these upayas (expedients) severally and collectively, a king was to win over his enemies and influence the activities of madhyama (intermediate) and Udasina (indifferent) kings. Manu asserted that the king was to act in such a manner that his allies, neutrals and enemies did not become superiors. The absence of intermediary king in this list did not imply that he being a friend must not be watched, Medhatithi held that this omission was due to metrical exigencies. He had to be watched for no one was friendly without a motive. He (the king) might adopt any measure even such as the formation of clique etc.

**Ambassadors**

Unlike the modern practice of stationing representatives, as permanent agents in foreign states, in ancient India they were officers, appointed for and sent on a special mission. The functions of an ambassador were to deliver the message correctly as entrusted to him, to make or break alliances or treaties, to declare war or make peace, to study the geographical position, and strong points, military

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217. Manu. 7. 108.
218. Ibid., 7,159.
219. Ibid., 7, 177.
220. Medhatithi and Kulluka on 7, 177.
strength and financial condition of a foreign state and to gather the
greatest possible information. He was thus primarily concerned with
the vital issues of a foreign, policy of a state. As the ambassadors
had to perform very important a well as delicate and dangerous duties,
the Manusmriti and Kautilya’s Arthasastra more or less prescribe
the same higher qualifications for them such as a noble family
background, modesty, tactfulness, eloquency of speech, capacity to
convey the message exactly as entrusted to him and a sharp and
excellent memory. The Manusamriti was conspicuously silent about
the different kinds of ambassadors, while Kautilya classified them
under three heads, viz.

(1) Nihsrstartha, i.e., a plenipotentiary. He was an ambassador
endowed with the full powers of the management of an affair and
also authorised to act on his own personal judgment and discretion
put subject to the interest of the state. Krishna may be cited as an
example of this type who acted with full discretion as the ambassador
of the Pandavas and tried to make negotiations with the Kauravas
before the Kurukshetra war.

(2) Parimitartha or Mitartha, i.e., an envoy whose rights were
limited. His duties also seem to have been lesser since Kautilya and
Kamandaka prescribe lesser qualifications for him

(3) Sasanabara or Sasana-vahaka, i.e., an ambassador who was
simply a “royal messenger”. He was assigned only one particular
task. Drupada’s Purohit to the Kauravas and Sar.jaya sent by
Dhritarashtra to the Pandavas could be cited as examples of this
type. This three-fold classification of ambassadors by Kautilya holds
good even in the modern times. It was based on the country to which
the ambassador assigned his duties and the types of functions which he has to discharge. Further, the *Manusmriti* emphasised the sacredness and inviolability of ambassadors. It laid down salutary regulations in connection with the behaviour to be meted out to them. An envoy was to be respected and treated courteously even if he conveyed an unpleasant message because he was merely the mouthpiece of the king who deputes him. He was never be killed. The murderer of an ambassador went to hell along with his ministers. The golden rule of immunity and privileges of the ambassadors was generally observed except once in the case of Krishna and that too not because Krishna was an envoy, but because he was the backbone of the Pandavas whom the Kauravas regarded as their greatest enemies.

According to Kautilya communications were kept up between the Courts of the different Powers through diplomatic agents. Even as early as the time of the Rig-Veda, 221 there was mention of envoys, but the practice of attaching diplomatic agents to foreign Courts could not have been established until much later times. There were various kinds of such agents, and their powers and responsibilities differed a great deal. Some were Plenipotentaries (Nisrishtartha), some Ambassadors (Duta), some Charges-d’ affaires (Parimitartha), while the rest were mere conveyors of royal messages (Sasana- hara). 222 Plenipotentaries had power to demand the observance of treaties,

222. *Arthasasra*, Bk. I. ch 16. The Agni Purana (Ch. 241), the Nltivakyam- rita (Ch. XIII.), and the Yukti-Kalpataru mention envoys of three kinds, nihsrishtartha, mitartha, and sasanaharaka.
to declare war or conclude peace, and to issue ultimatums in emergent cases. Krishna, for example, was a plenipotentiary when he was sent by the Pandavas to the Kuru Court with full powers just before the Great War. The ambassadors kept their own governments fully informed of the activities of the Court to which they were attached. They lived on terms of friendship with the great Officers-of-State, and acquainted themselves with all the affairs of the country. In particular, they made it their business to ascertain the number, size, and positions of the forts and military stations, the strength of the army, and the strong and weak points of the State. A Parimitartha was sent to a foreign court on a particular mission and possessed limited authority. The diplomatic agents of the inferior type took note of intrigues against the ruler, and supervised the work of the spies engaged in collecting information.

As the representative of a Foreign Power, an envoy enjoyed great privileges and immunities. The envoys were always courteously treated. As the responsibilities of an envoy were great, some care had to be taken in selecting the proper person. The following qualifications were essential in an ambassador: Loyalty to the King, freedom from vices, capacity, honesty, strength of character, eloquence, brilliance, forgiveness, ability to understand other people's thoughts, and of high birth. Great stress used to be laid on the conduct of an ambassador at a foreign Court. He was expected to behave with dignity and courtesy, and to preserve the good name of

223. *Arthasastra*, Bk. I. ch. 16. “In urgent cases the ambassadors have to act like ministers.”
224. The Nitivayamrita gives this illustration. Ch. XIII.
225. *Arthasastra*, Bk. I. ch. 16.
the State which he represented. When on a mission to an enemy State it was the duty of the emissary to act with courage and resolution, and at the same time show moderation and tact.\footnote{Arthasastra, Bk. I. ch. 16. 3 Ch. CCXL. si. 1.}

The maintenance of a balance of power was one of the problems in Foreign Politics which engaged the attention of the diplomats in ancient days. Kautilya insisted that a monarch had always to take care that none of the other Powers grew either too strong or became too weak. Thus a King always contemplated the balance of power among the twelve monarchs constituting the circle of foreign monarchs having dealings with his own government.

The ambassador sent to represent the King at a foreign court, were to be a man of a very sharp intellect, sweet-voiced, possessing eloquence of speech, and well versed in the arts of diplomacy.

Similarly according to Manu, another officer appointed by the king was the ambassador (Duta). The envoy was to be an honest and skilful person. He usually belonged to a noble family. He was to be well-versed in all sciences. He had the capability to understand hints, expressions of the face and gestures. That royal ambassador was applauded most who was generally pure within and outside, and endowed with an excellent memory, knower of countries and times, handsome, fearless and eloquent. The peace and war of the king depended on the ambassador. He was described as a person who alone was capable of making allies and separating them.\footnote{Manu. 7, 63-66.} He was to discover the acts of the enemy king, by the signs, hints and acts of his confidential servants and the measures, which that king...
wished to take by the gestures and actions of his ministers. Having known about the designs of the enemy an envoy was to deliver correct information to his king about the manoeuvres of the enemy. Thus the *Manusmriti* gave a detailed account of the responsibilities and duties of an ambassador which showed his importance in realm of diplomacy. A distinction had been made between an ordinary and a commanded ambassadors.\textsuperscript{228}

**Spies (Cara)**

In India, the system of espionage is as old as Rigveda. Both Manu and Kautilya said that it was a permanent and prominent feature of a state and was one of the eight limbs of the army. As spies were the “eyes of the kings” they were to be appointed by the ruler to collect information about the internal affairs and administration of his kingdom as well as foreign states. Hence, they were scattered throughout his own kingdom and also foreign states. Secrecy was the characteristic feature which distinguished them from the envoys. If found out and detected, the spies could be ill-treated and even killed by the foreign state. Spies were therefore to be so clever as not to be detected or identified by others. They gave a list of persons who could be entrusted with this risky job, such as Brahmanas, hypocrites, siddhas, persons capable of doing impersonation, posing as blind and deaf depending on the situation and be as cunning as possible. The most important condition was to examine them thoroughly before their appointment and to appoint them so secretly that they could not recognise one another to avoid

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 7, 67: Kulluka has elucidated the meaning of signs like ingita, akara, cesta separately.
any conspiracy among the spies themselves. Bhishma himself employed such persons as spies.

The spies (Cara) played important role in diplomacy. It was through them that the king acquired the knowledge of the secrets and weak points of his enemy. Medhatithi was also aware of this purpose served by spies. Many regulations for the employment of spies in public life had been laid down in the Manusmriti.  

Spies were appointed to know about the behaviour of each rural official. At midday or at midnight king deliberated either alone or with his ministers on the doing of his spies. Manu enjoined upon the king to be on guard and well armed while meeting the spies. In this connection Manu referred to five types of spies without naming them. The spies were employed by the king in his own country to settle the truth in judicial matter. The spies were also used to detect thieves who stole property, who showed themselves openly and those who laid concealed. Among them, the open rogues were those who subsisted by cheating in the sale of various marketable commodities, but the hidden rogues were burglars, robbers, cheaters, gamblers and who took bribes those who lived by teaching the performance of auspicious ceremonies, sanctimonious, hypocrites, fortune-tellers, officials of high rank, physicians, who acted improperly, prostitutes, men who lived by showing their proficiency in arts and those who were non Aryans but who walked in disguised

229. Manu. 7, 122, Kamandaka, Nitisara, XII. 32. Distinguishing between Duta and cara, Kamandaka says that a Data works openly while a cara secretly.
230. Ibid., 7, 153, 223.
231. Ibid., 7, 154; Medhatithi names five types of spies viz., Katika (a scholar), Udasthita (fallen-Ascetic), Grhapatika (a householder in trouble), Tapasa (hermit).
232. Ibid., 7, 182.
like the Aryans. Spies were also used to constantly ascertain the kings own and his enemies strength.

While choosing a spy, no distinction of caste, creed or sex was observed and king’s spies were drawn from different social classes. The King-in-Council was to appoint these officers after satisfying himself completely as to their character and ability. The spy was expected to be very smart, swift, intelligent and efficient. Dishonest and misbehaving spies were to be punished and the honest ones rewarded and protected. The spies were given deterrent punishments for repeated wrong information. In Arthasastra, Kautilya mentioned nine types of spies. They were as follows:

a) Kaptika-Chhatra (Fraudulent-disciple)
b) Udasthita (The Recluse)
c) Grihapatika (A House-holder)
d) Vaidehaka (A Merchant Spy)
e) Tapasa (Ascetic Practising Austerities)
f) Satri (Classmate or Colleague Spies)
g) Tikshna (Fiery Spies)
h) Rasada (Poisoners)
i) Bhikshyuki (A Mendicant Woman)

Manu is silent about the means to be employed by the spies to create trouble in other states. Kautilya, on the other hand, permits any and every means for the spies, moral or immoral. He says that they should create dissensions in the foreign states, indulge the army chiefs in love-affairs with young ladies and after wards cause

\[233\] Ibid, 9, 256-60.
\[234\] Ibid., 9, 298.
animosity among them. They should give poison to them by saying that it would make his beloved devoted to him. They should disguise themselves as palmists and arouse the ambition of becoming a king in the chief and high officers of the state and make them unloyal to the king. In war-time, they should, distribute wine or liquor, mixed with poison among the important military officers.