

Significance of Strategic and Military Studies in International Relations

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Abstract

The foreign policies of all the countries, big or small, have strategic dimensions. Most of the time, these strategic dimensions constitute vital interests pursued by states.

Strategic study is an important sub-field of International Relation. Its significance lies in the fact that the foreign policies of all the countries, big or small, have strategic dimensions. Most of the time, these strategic dimensions constitute vital interests pursued by states. The term 'strategy' was originally used in the military domain. A strategy was meant to organize and command armies in the battlefield, with a view to winning war in such a way that the maximum damage is inflicted on the enemy. After the Industrial Revolution, the term, 'strategy' came to acquire many non-military connotations, as a result of the heightened economic activity and the expansion of trade, both national and international. The terms 'economic strategy', 'trade strategy' or 'business strategy' etc came into vogue. Even the term of 'peace strategy' came to be used frequently. Given its significance, enormous scope and dimensions, it becomes necessary to study the origin and evolution of the concept of strategy. The views and definitions given by many specialists in the field of strategic studies are illuminating in this regard. Some of these definitions and views are discussed below.

Some writers look upon strategy, as an 'art'. Whereas others regard it as a 'means' to achieve politico-military ends. The writer, who defines strategy as an art, includes R. H. Liddell Hart, Andre Beaufre and Edward Mead Earle. According to R.H. Liddell Hart strategy is "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy". According to Andre Beaufre, strategy means "the art of the dialectic of force", or "the art of dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute". According to Edward Mead Earle, "strategy as the art of controlling all the resources of a nation (or a coalition of nations) in order to effectively promote and secure its vital interests against actual or potential enemies". All of them focus their attention to military dimension of strategy and they relate strategy to war. According to them, the real significance of strategy can be measured in the war only. In this context, Leer defines strategy as "the

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synthesis, integration of all military affairs, their generalization, their philosophy". Among the writers who define strategy as a 'means' are Clausewitz and Von Moltke. According to Clausewitz, "strategy is the employment of battle as the means towards the attainment of the object of the war". Von Moltke defines strategy as "the practical adoption of the means placed at a general's disposal to the attainment of the object in view". The military aspect of strategy has been reflected in their definitions. The definitions given by some of the leading writers on strategy indicate that strategy is considered an 'art' and a 'means', and relates to the war to achieve foreign policy ends. Yet, these definitions remain narrow in their scope, as they pertain chiefly to war. With the changing nature of the technological revolution and wide ranging socio-economic development, the scope and the activities of strategy have been expanded from time to time. Strategy gets a broader definition which includes some non-military dimensions of strategy i.e., political, economic, technological etc.

Strategy is defined as an 'art' of controlling-all the resources of a nation, and, at the same time, it is considered a 'means' to use the entire state's power i.e. economic, political, ideological, military, and other elements to achieve the state's political objectives. From the above definitions of the term strategy, it clearly indicates that, strategy is related to war, identified with military dimensions. Many of the Western writers, who sought to expatiate the term strategy, focus their attention on military aspects. According to them, the Western concept of 'strategy' based on the quest for diplomatic and technological solutions to military problems. They considered strategy to be an application of military resources for achievement of political objectives.

If we analyze the above definitions given by the leading writers on the subject strategy, it becomes clear that the traditional definition of strategy is confined within military dimensions and strategy is related to war in international relations. From these definitions, we can draw some essential points, i.e. firstly, strategy deals with 'means' and 'end', secondly, strategy is concerned with the 'threat' and 'use' of force, and thirdly, strategy is related to the application of military means to achieve the political ends during both war and peace, fourthly, strategy is considered an 'art', that controls all the resources of a nation to fight against the enemies. But, on the other hand, the broad notion of strategy is intimately connected with some of the non-military aspects as well as military aspects. Among the military dimensions, technology is important. If there is any development in military technology, strategy automatically changes its contours. This shows that the understanding of the term strategy has changed from time to time in accordance with the changing circumstances. In this context, Alastair Buchans opines that, "the real content of strategy is concerned not merely with the war and battles but with the application or maintenance of force so that it contributes most effectively to the development of political objectives". In such a broad concept of strategy,

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maintenance and use of military force is only one of the elements, although a very important element, which is always kept in mind by most states.

Some writers differentiate between three types of strategies, (1) offensive strategies, which involve taking the battle to the adversary, with a view to destroying the enemy's fighting capability or compelling the enemy to retreat or surrender, (2) defensive strategies that involve blocking the adversary's attack and denying the enemy its objectives, (3) deterrent strategies which attempt to raise the cost of the adversary of continuing the battle, seeking to convince the enemy to abandon its aggressive intentions. Offensive and defensive strategies focus on wearing down the enemy's military capability, whereas deterrent strategies focus on wearing down the enemy's will. In any given campaign, military commanders may well use a mix of these strategies to attain their objectives effectively.

All strategies have content which includes (1) as the dimensions of strategy, where 'dimensions' have meant the various fields of activity - political, social, operational, logistical - which should be taken into account to make strategy effective; (2) as the kinds of means used to attain the aims of strategy - military, economic, diplomatic, ideological and other means; these have been rejected in the partial strategies - military, economic etc, which are included in the overall - i.e., state-strategy in military affairs, especially in war; (3) as the kinds of methods used open war and convert in peace time; (4) as a variant of the latter in the form of strategy, functions corresponding to the main functions of armed forces; (5) as missions assigned to strategy in military planning.

Strategies often have well thought out and well integrated elements. Clausewitz identified five elements of strategy, i.e., (1) psychological element including morale, (2) military force including its size, composition and organization, (3) geometry of the situation including the relative positions and the movements of the forces and their geometric relationship to obstacles, channels, objectives, etc, (4) terrain including mountains, rivers, woods, and roads which might influence military activities and (5) supply including its means and sources. The best strategy, writes Clausewitz, "is always to be very strong, first in general and then at the decisive point". According to Clausewitz, "the strategist must therefore define an aim for the entire operational side of the war that would be in accordance with its purposes. In other words, he will draft the plan of the war and the aim will determine the series of actions intended to achieve it; he will in fact shape the individual campaigns and within these, decide on the individual engagements". Michael Howard locates four elements of strategy i.e., the operational, logistical, social and technological.

The function of strategy is to organize the elements of national power as a 'means' to achieve political 'ends' of the states. Broadly speaking, there are three main components of a state's power i.e., political, economic and military. Strategic studies deal with the interactions of the component of a state's power during war and peace.

Andre Beaufre gave his idea of a total strategy both in peace and war. In relation to the idea of total strategy, he proposed five patterns of strategies i.e., (1)

direct threat that relates to the situations when the objectives are only of moderate importance and the resources available are large. The more threat of the use of these resources may lead the enemy to accept the conditions which it is desired to impose on him, (2) indirect pressure where the objectives is moderate, but the resources are inadequate for making a decisive threat. Therefore, less unobvious methods are required; political, economic, or diplomatic, (3) a series of successive actions, the objective is of major importance, the resources are limited, the direct threat is combined with indirect pressure and a limited application of military force, (4) a protracted struggle, but a low level of intensity, the objective importance is for greater to one side than to the other, the resources are inadequate to secure a military decision, one must wear down the enemy's morale and tire him out, (5) violent conflict aiming at military victory, various circumstances.

The discipline of strategic studies is a dynamic one. As a sub-field of International Relations, strategic studies came into more systematic manner in the post Second World War period. In this context, Barry Buzan says that, as a sub-discipline of International Relations, strategic studies are a product of nuclear age. During this period, strategic studies mainly focused their attention to military and security dimensions of international relations. In the post second World War period, the discipline of strategic studies was dominated by nuclear deterrence, arms control, disarmament, limited war, revolution war, crises management, alliances and nuclear arms competition, etc. In this context, Barry Buzan argues that the focus of strategic studies lies in the examination of the military technological variable in International Relations. In the post World War II period, the main task of strategic studies was how peace is to be maintained in international society. But after the post World War II period, the scope and content of strategic studies has been expanded from time to time, and the policy makers define the discipline of strategic studies in accordance, in such a manner that it suits their interests. For example, in 1950, strategic studies were identified themselves with nuclear questions and superpower relationship; in 1960, strategic studies were dealt with terrorism and unconventional war; in 1970, strategic studies were related with regional security questions, in 1980, strategic studies were concerned with the problem of conventional strategy.

Military dimension is one of the important aspects of strategic studies. Both strategic and military studies are inter-related to each other. Military studies as a discipline are defined as a subject of war oriented and are mainly concerned with the practical activities of the state for the preparation of military force for war. As a discipline, military studies focused their attention to the whole organization of defensive and offensive forces of a state, explains a state's security system. At the same time, military studies are concerned with national security policy; try to

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explain a state's armed forces, its military organizations, structure, military culture, and its effectiveness. Military, as an element of national power and a determinant of foreign policy, is related to security and integrity of a state. Some writers treated military as an instrument of war. But the central purposes of the military studies are to serve as an instrument of war that can be directed against other states. Military studies identify itself with war. At the same time, military studies are based on the use of force for political goals. In addition, military studies may be used as an instrument of diplomacy in international relations.

Strategic dimension is an intrinsic part of the foreign policy of states. The states define the term 'strategy' in accordance to their requirement of mutual interests, goals, and for common problems. This appears to be a dynamic and broad concept, whose scope is expanded from time to time in accordance with the demanding situations. Through their strategic partnership, countries try to protect their mutual interests, ensure their security systems, achieve their common goals and solve their common problems in the international scenario by their joint cooperation. Military cooperation is a key aspect of strategic partnership. Countries, through their strategic partnership, enhance their bilateral military cooperation. This signifies that both strategy and military are interrelated, and both are influenced by each other.

Notes and Reference

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2. For details see Andre Beaufre as quoted by Julian Lider, in *Military Theory-Concept, Structure, Problems*, (Gower Publishing Company Ltd., England, 1983), p.6.
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7. For details see Michael Howard as quoted by Colin S. Gray, in "Inescapable Geography", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.1.22, No.2-3, June-September, 1999, p.169.
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9. See for details Anatoli Kutsenko as quoted by Mohd. Moazzam Ali, in "Russia's Foreign Policy and 'Strategic Partnership' Move Since 1991: Implications For India", in Shashikant Jha & Bhashwati Sarkar, eds., *Amidst Turbulence and Hope-Transition in Russia and Eastern Europe*, (Lancer's Books, New Delhi, 2002), p.241
10. See for details Sifuddin Soz as quoted by Artem Rudnitsky, "Russia and India: In Search of A New Strategy", *World Affairs*, Vol.3, No.2, April-June. 1999, p.81.
11. For details see Documents of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's Visit To India,