**Kautilya on Far-sight, Foresight and Freedom**

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**Introduction**

The ancient sages in India had a vision of a harmonious, healthy and peaceful society. They developed the *dharmic* values of non-violence, compassion, truthfulness, honesty, tolerance and cleanliness to realize their vision. They evolved a consistent model emphasizing internal restraint (of ego, desire and attachment) through self-disciplining of senses, which resulted in a life style that helped one in getting rid of the cycle of birth-death-rebirth and attaining *moksha* – a state of eternal bliss. For the less enlightened, they created the concepts of heaven and hell and evolved moral codes for living a productive and good life here on earth and enjoying residence in heaven after death. Their sole weapon for spreading such knowledge was persuasion. They were, however, aware of the possibility that some individuals might not be convinced and adhere to the codes. They prescribed performance of voluntary penance for digressions from the norms. Sure enough, some individuals did try to breach the ethical norms and resorted to evil means. People at that time believed that (i) *adharma* (corruption, cruelty and other maladies) once started would spread like cancer and (ii) even if it was removed its reoccurrence was inevitable. They also believed that whenever *adharma* peaked to such proportions as to destroy the system itself and beyond the human prowess to come out of it, a savior (*avatar*, *viz.,* a being / superhuman with Godly qualities) would appear to eradicate evil *(adharma)*.1

Kautilya’s Arthashastra made a paradigm shift on the issue. Being an empiricist he did not believe in fate and asserted that a person’s destiny was quite in his own hands. He counted on human ingenuity to devise an organizational structure and a legal structure to complement the ethical norms to reduce scope for corruption and to impose punishment for digressions. His goal was to internalize preventive and positive measures for imbuing governance with *dharma* for doing which he adopted a multi-disciplinary approach. There has been no known thinker like Kautilya, who made seminal contributions to economics, law and national security in an integrated manner. He set out to build a prosperous and secure society on ethical foundation. His Arthashastra is a manual on how to promote *yogakshema–*peaceful enjoyment of prosperity–of all the people, that is, (i) to maintain peace by keeping the potential enemies of freedom at bay; (ii) to bring prosperity and (iii) to ensure that everyone enjoyed prosperity. Note, *yogakshema* is a positive, holistic and richer concept than the concept of human security, which indicates merely an absence of negatives.

Kautilya’s discussion on national security was comprehensive and method**i**cal. It involved (i) identification of all the critical components of national security, (ii) assignment of responsibilities to each one, (iii) specification of desired qualifications/characteristics of each one and (iv) how to achieve their optimum levels through moral and appropriate material incentives. Section II presents his conceptual framework on the provision of national security.

Kautilya expected the king and his advisers to be far-sighted since he was concerned about the possibility of their myopic behavior. According to him, farsightedness was needed to evaluate the short-run and long rum implications/impact of a foreign treaty, project or a policy. This is presented in Section III. His predecessors had understood the importance of foresightedness in protecting oneself. Kautilya extended its role to preventing an aggression and thus defending freedom. This is discussed in Section IV. Concluding observations are provided in the final section. Kautilya approached domestic and international affairs differently. His approach to domestic affairs was guided by *dharma* whereas his approach to international affairs was based on prudence. This discussion is presented in Section I.

**I Kautilya on Selection of an Appropriate Approach**

Kautilya’s approach to peaceful enjoyment of prosperity was people-centric. He (p 149) wrote, “In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects (1.19).” According to him, the king should ‘serve his royal public like a loyal servant’. It was king’s moral duty to engineer prosperity and protect people against foreign aggression. He expected the king to protectpeoplefrom all potential threats. He (p 128) believed, “It is the duty of the king to protect the people from all calamities (4.3).”

*Menace of Slavery*: Kautilya argued that if a country lost independence, it virtually lost everything. He believed that poverty was a living death and argued that no country could ever prosper under a foreign ruler. He understood the menace of foreign rule. He (p 175) argued, “A foreign king, on the other hand, is one who has seized the kingdom from a legitimate king still alive; because it does not belong to him, he impoverishes it by extravagance, carries off its wealth or sells it. If the country becomes too difficult for him to handle, he abandons it and goes away (8.2).” He (p 132) also warned, “Harassment by the enemy’s army not only affects the whole country but also ruins it by plunder, slaughter, burning and destruction (8.4).”

*Preferred Peace over War*: Usually weak countries pursue peace. However, Kautilya suggested pursuing peace with strength provided the terms of agreement were fair. He (p 568) wrote, “When the benefit accruing to kings under a treaty, irrespective of their status as the weaker, equal or stronger king, is fair to each one, peace by the agreement shall be preferred course of action; if the benefits are to be unfairly distributed, war is preferable (7.8).” He also pointed out that the losses might be a lot less under a diplomatic solution. He (p 635) wrote, “That which entails small losses is a gain by diplomacy rather than by war (9.4).” Clearly, he preferred peace to war.

*Sovereignty at any Cost*: Kautilya recommended to use every available means and at any cost to protect independence. He (p 541) asserted, “An enemy’s destruction shall be brought about even at the cost of great losses in men, material and wealth (7.13).” He was very explicit about this stance. He would recommend to the king not to hesitate in the use of extraordinarymethods, even including those normally considered immoral, for eliminating criminals and in dealing with an aggressor, to ensure safety and security of his people. For example, he (p 269) suggested, “A King, who finds himself in great financial difficulty, may collect [additional] revenue [using the methods described below] (5.2.1).” He (pp 272-273) recommended expropriating temple property, exploiting the gullibility of the people and by hook or crook confiscating the properties of traitors and wicked people. Kautilya (p 540) added, “Deceptive occult practices shall be used to frighten the enemy. It is also said that these can be used [against one’s own people] in case of a revolt in order to protect the kingdom (14.2.45).” But this is to be done only in emergent situations and not recklessly.

Kautilya (p 128) wrote, “Whenever danger threatens, the king shall protect all those afflicted like a father [protects his children] (4.3).” He (p 180) added, “He shall, however, treat leniently, like a father [would treat his son], those whose exemptions have ceased to be effective (2.1).” According to Kautilya, a king should take care of his subjects like a father takes care of his children. He would not recommend to a king to behave like a father towards a hyena that was bent upon harming his children. Thus, he recommended that decisions related to domestic economy (*arthaniti* and *dandaniti*) should be guided by *dharma* but those related to international affairs (national security, treaties, trade) must be utilitarian. This distinction should be kept in mind for a correct appreciation of his ideas and insights.

**II Kautilya’s Comprehensive Approach to the Provision of National Security**

Kautilya approached national security in a comprehensive and methodical manner. He believed that the most important task was to identify all the potential adversaries and gather information on their strengths and weaknesses. According to him, national security could not be discussed in isolation or in the abstract. He emphasized the imperative of achieving parity with the potential adversaries and without any delay. He justified the urgency by arguing that power bred more power implying that any delay would widen the gap in relative power.2

Then he proceeded to identify all the factors relevant to national security and gave concrete suggestions to achieve their optimum levels. He believed in launching a project/treaty/policy only after undertaking a sound cost-benefit analysis. He would ask three questions. (i) Who should decide the desirability and feasibility of a project/treaty? (ii) What should be their qualifications for making a sound decision? (iii) What type of incentives would be required to elicit optimum effort? Kautilya realized the limitations of human mind in solving complex problems. He suggested appointment of wise advisers to the king on the worthiness of a project, thus placing wisdom as the top qualification. He (p 600) wrote, “When there is choice between a wise son and a brave son, it is better to give the brave son, who though valorous, lacks wisdom. For, a wise son, though timid, uses his intelligence in his endeavors; like the hunter outwitting the elephant, the intelligent outwit the brave (7.17).” He assigned this decision-making responsibility to the king and his advisers.

*Qualification of an Adviser*: He (p, 120) described, “A councilor or minister of the highest rank should be a native of the state, born in a high family and controllable [by the king]. He should have been trained in all the arts and have logical ability to foresee things. He should be intelligent, persevering, dexterous, eloquent, energetic, bold, brave, and able to endure adversities and firm in loyalty. He should neither be haughty or fickle. He should be amicable and not excite hatred or enmity in others (1.9).” Why did Kautilya emphasize ‘logical ability to foresee’? This is the most critical requirement for national security as explained in Section IV below.

According to him, qualification was necessary but not sufficient in eliciting optimal effort. He suggested moral and appropriate material incentives. For example, he recommended a high annual salary of 48,000 *panas* (rectangular shaped silver coin) to a councilor, 60 *panas* were considered sufficient to support a family for a year.

*Qualifications of Chief of Defense*: After the decision had been taken, then who should carry that out and what should be their qualifications, that is, skills, tools of analysis to implement the project? According to Kautilya, The Chief of Defense must haveexpertise in strategy and tactics and knowledge of weapons. He (p 687) wrote, “The Chief of Defense shall be: (a) an expert in the use of all kinds of weapons used in warfare; (b) Conversant with the relative strengths of the four wings of the army and how to deploy them in battle (2.33.9).” A handsome salary of 48,000 *panas* for the Chief of Defense was recommended.

Soldiers must be well-trained and enthusiastic. Kautilya emphasized the importance of both training and morale of the army. He (p 685) stated, “Some teachers say that among Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra troops, a higher *varna* force shall be mobilized before a lower one because the higher the *varna* the more the spirit. Kautilya disagrees. An enemy may win over Brahmin troops by prostrating himself before them. It is better to have either an army composed of Kshatriyas trained in the use of weapons or a Vaishya or Sudra army with a large number of men (9.2).”

*Fairness in Giving Rewards*: Kautilya believed that violation of horizontal equity and reneging on a promised reward would result in a crowding-out effect, that is would reduce effort. According to him (p, 519), “The types of people who are likely to be angry with the king are: someone to whom a promised reward has not been given” and “of two people equally skilled or efficient, the one who is humiliated (1.14).”

*Moral Motivation*: Kautilya emphasized three things, common objective ‘service to the state’, an economic incentive (‘share the wealth’) and a moral incentive (‘the heaven that awaits’). According to him (p, 712), the king should say to his troops, “I am as much a servant [of the State] as you are; we shall share the wealth of this state.” He continued, “Bards and praise-singers shall describe the heaven that awaits the brave and the hell that shall be the lot of cowards. They shall extol the clan, group, family, deeds and conduct of the warriors (10.3).”

R*ole of Intelligence*: Kautilya realized the critical importance of information. It provided an edge in negotiations and in assessing strengths and weaknesses of potential adversaries. His (p 177) advice to a king was: “No enemy shall know his secrets. He shall, however, know all his enemy’s weaknesses. Like a tortoise, he shall draw in any limb of his that is exposed (1.15).” He suggested setting-up an elaborate intelligence wing. He (p 506) recommended, “A king shall have his own set of spies, all quick in their work, in the courts of the enemy, the ally, the Middle, and the Neutral kings to spy on the kings as well as their eighteen types of high officials (1.12.20).” He (p 562) added, “He shall always station envoys and clandestine agents in all states of the circle. These shall cultivate those acting against the interests of the conqueror and, while maintaining their own secrecy, destroy repeatedly such inimical persons (7.13).”

*Winning Public Support*: According to Kautilya, a king could win public support by (i) bring**ing** prosperity and (ii) administration of justice. He (p 159) explained, “When a people are impoverished, they become greedy; when they are greedy, they become disaffected; when disaffected, they either go to the enemy or kill their ruler themselves (7.5).” He recommended, “Therefore, the king shall not act in such a manner as would cause impoverishment, greed or disaffection among the people; if however, they do appear, he shall immediately take remedial measures (7.5).” He (p 573) observed, “When a strong but unjust king is attacked, his subjects will not come to his help but will either topple him or go over to the attacker. On the other hand, when a weak but just king is attacked, his subjects will not only come to his help but also follow him until death (7.5). The following Table captures his comprehensive approach to national security.

**Table 2: Kautilya’s Comprehensive Approach to National Security**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Division of Responsibilities | Factors Relevant to National Security | Desired Attributes | Appropriate incentives | Feasibility |
| Why to do, that is undertaking cost-benefit analysis | King (Prime Minister/President) | Ethical, Far-sighted, Foresighted | Moral Duty and Enlightened self-interest | Unlikely, No such requirement to become President or Prime Minister |
| Advisers | Far-sighted, Foresighted | Moral and Material | Yes |
| How to do (implementation) | Chief of defense | Knowledgeable about use of weapons, expertise in strategy and tactics | Moral and Material | Yes |
| Military | Trained and Enthusiastic | Moral, Material and fairness in awards | Yes |
| Scientists/engineers | Understanding of both Theoretical and Applied Knowledge | Moral and Performance-based compensation | Yes |
| Information | Intelligence | Knowledgeable, uncompromising | Special training and material and moral incentives | Yes |
|  | Armament | Self-sufficiency in producing armaments that provide an edge over a potential adversary | Providing appropriate incentives to scientists, engineers and manufacturers | Yes |
| Support | Public | Unwavering | Prosperity and Fairness | Yes |

*Production of Armaments*: Kautilya’s goal was to have strength and an edge in every component of the national security. Unless weapons were (i) more advanced than that of a potential adversary (the edge) and (ii) were produced domestically (self- sufficiency), there was always a threat to national security. How to achieve it? At that time, elephants provided an edge in a battle. Kautilya gave high priority to preserving and developing elephant forests. He (p 620) argued, “Some teachers say that land with productive forests is preferable to land with elephant forests, because a productive forest is the source of a variety of materials for many undertakings while the elephant forests supply only elephants. Kautilya disagrees. One can create productive forests on many types of land but not elephant forests. For one depends on elephants for the destruction of an enemy’s forces (7.11).” Elephants are not needed anymore but Kautilya’s insight could now be generalized to conserving and developing a range of critical inputs needed to strengthen support and supply chains. These constitute essential elements of defense preparedness. Our scientists, engineers and manufacturers of weapons need the same kind of nurturing as the elephants were getting at that time.

*Selection of an Ally*: This is a topic in itself and needs much space for discussion. Kautilya mentioned both defensive and offensive needs for allies implying non-alignment was not a viable strategy. He (p 606) wrote, “The best ally is one who has the following six qualities: an ally of the family for a long time, constant, amenable to control, powerful in his support sharing a common interest, able to mobilize [his forces] quickly and not a man who betrays [his friends].” The issue is how to identify and cultivate such an ally in a dynamic international situation? It might be interesting to illustratively apply Kautilya’s ideas to India selecting an ally in the present day international scenario summarized below in a simplified form.

**Table 2: Selection of an Ally**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Japan | | USA | | Russia | |
| Attribute | Related to China | Related to Pakistan | Related to China | Related to Pakistan | Related to China | Related to Pakistan |
| Duration of friendship | Long | | Short | | Medium | |
| Dependable | Yes | Yes | May be | No | No | Yes |
| Manageable | Not Applicable | | No | | No | |
| Powerful in Support | Yes | Yes | May be | No | No | Yes |
| Common interest | Yes | Yes | Somewhat | No | No | No |
| Readiness | Not Applicable | | Yes | | Yes | |

United States seems to be tired of wars and not in position to help anyone in a large war. It could have helped India in 1962 but chose not to help. It is more interested in commercial sale of defence equipment to countries like India but without losing the edge of keeping that of the latest technology for itself. Moreover, it demands and expects total submissiveness. Russia is likely to help if there were a conflict with Pakistan but not with China as happened in 1962. Japan has the cutting-edge technology, has the resources and a common objective with India. It is likely to help if there were a conflict with China or with Pakistan. Historically also, there have been a strong bond between the two countries. Kautilya would choose Japan as a strategic partner. That does not imply that Kautilya would ignore other countries and international organizations.

**III Kautilya on Far-sightedness in Negotiating Treaties**

Kautilya expected the king to promote *Yogakshema*-peaceful enjoyment of prosperity- of all the people. He argued that undertaking of productive activities was essential to bringing prosperity. He (p 149) suggested, “Hence the king shall be ever active in the management of the economy. The root of wealth is economic activity and lack of it brings material distress. In the absence of fruitful economic activity, both current prosperity and future growth are in danger of destruction. A king can achieve the desired objectives and abundance of riches by undertaking productive economic activity (1.19).” Far-sightedness was essential to the determination of an activity whether it was productive or unproductive. Thus, foresightedness was essential to the engineering of prosperity. He believed that prosperity was essential to maintaining freedom from foreign rule since a poor country could not have the resources to protect itself. That is, farsightedness was needed for both prosperity and protection.

Kautilya understood the critical role of far-sightedness in analyzing the short-run and long rum implications/impact of a policy/project/treaty. He wanted the decision–makers to be far-sighted since myopic ones would focus only on the short-run and lose out on the gains or incur losses in the long run. In addition to the time-dimension, he (p 635) included other factors, such as whether the gain was temporary, permanent, safe, righteous, growing or great.

*A Comprehensive List of Relevant Factors in Making a Choice*: (i) He (p 636) explained, “When the gains from two campaigns are equal, the king shall compare the following qualities and choose the one which has more good points: place and time; the power and the means required to acquire it; the pleasure or displeasure caused by it*;* speed or slowness of getting it; the proximity or distance, the immediate and future consequences;its high value or constant worth; and its abundance or variety (9.4).” It took more than two thousand years to reach this level of sophisticated analysis. He knew combinatorial rules and the following possibilities are discernible:

**Table 3: Table of possible Combinations of Gains/Losses**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Long Run | | | |
|  |  | Safe Gain/ positive impact | Risky gain/ | No gain or loss | Loss |
| Short-run | Gain | Accept  Case 1 | Need discounting for the risk  Case 4 | Accept  Case 7 | Need weighing short-run gain against long run loss  Case 10 |
| No gain no loss | Accept  Case 2 | Need discounting for the risk  Case 5 | Irrelevant  Case 8 | Reject  Case 11 |
| Loss | Need weighing the short-run loss against long run gain  Case 3 | Needs discounting for the risk  Case 6 | Reject  Case 9 | Reject  Case 12 |

Kautilya focused on some challenging possibilities, such as Cases 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10. The decision on other possibilities was very easy since in cases like 1 and 4 there was no conflict. A few instances from *The* *Arthashastra* would clarify the position:

Case 3 in Table 3: (i) He discussed the immediate and future impacts of several policies. For example, he (p 642) wrote, ‘helping a neighbour on the flank of the enemy with money or troops [without asking for payment; immediate loss of money or troops but long-term gain]’ (9.7). That is, the immediate effect was negative but long-term impact was expected to be positive.

(ii) Kautilya (p 594) asserted, “A king may agree to forego a large immediate gain and seek [only] a small future benefit if he intends to use again the partner who is being helped (7.8).” Clearly, he expected a larger gain from reputation building.

Case 4, 5 or 6: He (p 617) asked, “Which is preferable—an immediate small gain or a large gain in the future?” According to him, the answer depended on two factors: “A large gain in the future is preferable if it is like a seed [yielding fruit in the future] and if it is not likely to disappear [before fruition]. Otherwise, [if there is no growth and if there is a danger of it not fructifying] the small immediate gain is preferable (7.9).”

Case 7: In this case, there was no need for doing any calculations: “A great gain is a substantial gain available immediately (9.4).”

Kautilya (p 158) stated, “A king shall employ, without hesitation, the methods of secret punishment against traitors in his own camp and against enemies; but he should do so with forbearance keeping in mind the future consequences as well as immediate results (5.1).” He discussed many other challenging possibilities but his basic message was that decision-makers must possess farsightedness for a correct evaluation of a treaty or project.

**IV Role of Foresight in the Prevention of Calamities**

*Critical Role of Foresight*: Kautilya’s predecessors considered possession of foresight as a life saver. They wrote animal fables to teach the young to develop this component of wisdom. Recently, Weise (2012) uses one of the animal fables to show how the lack of foresightedness of a traveler resulted in his loss of life and another fable to show how foresightedness of a cat and mouse saved their lives. He casts these fables in a game-theoretic setup. It is a very novel way and make them look like as if these were written a day before yesterday. Kautilya (p 205) also warned a would-be adviser to the king as: “A wise man makes self-protection his first and constant concern (5.416.17).” However, he extended its role in many directions. He argued that maintenance of both peace and prosperity, to a large extent, depended on preparedness and that in turn depended on foresightedness. According to him, decision-makers must be foresighted. If a ruler (CEO) did not foresee a threat, he would not be able to take any preventive or remedial measures. Kautilya emphasized the critical role of foresight in reducing the probability of occurrence of a catastrophe, accidents and other preventable situations.

Specifically, according to Kautilya, foresightedness was required in undertaking both preventive and remedial measures to handle a potential threat arising from an attack, occurrence of a famine or moral decay. Such calamities affect the whole country and, therefore, are labeled as sources of systemic risk. He (p 116) wrote, “In the interests of the prosperity of the country, a king should be diligent in foreseeing the possibility of calamities, try to avert them before they arise, overcome those which happen, remove all obstructions to economic activity and prevent loss of revenue to the state (8.4).” The following table captures his ideas on the role of foresight.

**Table 4: Role of Foresightedness in Preventing Calamities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Seriousness of a Threat | Source of Threat | Preventive Measures | Remedial Measures |
| Very Serious (called Systemic Risk) | Aggression | Becoming more powerful than the potential aggressor | Loss minimization through negotiations |
| Famine | Expanding Irrigation facilities | Building buffer stocks of foodfgrains |
| Moral Decay | Ethical Anchoring through ethical education | Complementing penance with secular law |

*Other Minor Situations*: Kautilya provided many situations in which foresightedness was very helpful. He (p 596)stated, “If a king believes that the one to whom troops are lent will, after achieving the objective for which they were hired, appropriate them himself, send them to hostile lands or jungles, or, in some fashion make them useless, the forces shall not be lent, using the pretext that they are needed elsewhere.

If, however, he is obliged to lend his troops, they shall be lent only for the limited period of that campaign, on condition that they shall stay and fight together and be protected from all dangers till the end of the campaign; as soon as the campaign is over, they shall be withdrawn on some pretext (7.8).” Further (p 624), “If the stronger ruler is not upright, the king shall quickly withdraw under some pretext, when the work has been done. If the stronger ruler is upright, the king shall wait until he is given permission to leave. The king shall make all efforts to move away from a dangerous situation, after ensuring the safety of the queen. Even if the king receives a small share, or even no share, from a stronger king, he shall go away with a seemingly? content look. Later, when the strong king comes under the king’s power [for any reason] twice the loss shall be exacted.”

**V Concluding Observations**

Kautilya’s approach to prosperity was ethical, foresighted (pro-active) and farsighted. However, his approach to negotiations with a foreign ruler was utilitarian in nature, that is, instead of ethics, prudence was given primacy. His ideas on National Security constituted a sub-set of the comprehensive system of governance into which it is fully integrated. Hence, efficient, caring and righteous governance with happiness and satisfaction of people as a necessary outcome; a robust economy with an inclusive growth; a system of preparedness to deal with natural calamities and external threats; a far-sighted external affairs policy with astute diplomacy, and people’s support in the form of strong national pride and nationalist sentiments and commitment, etc. become essential elements of the national security system. Preparedness for meeting external threats on a stand-alone basis would not be very effective. The idea of good internal governance providing muscles to national security.

Kautilya considered both necessary and sufficient conditions for achieving optimum levels of efficiency. According to Basham, even a potter understood the benefits of assembly-type (called Fordism) division of labor. Kautilya and other ancient thinkers understood the cognitive division of labor. That is, pooling of information, knowledge and wisdom of various individuals to arrive at the best possible decision. Kautilya’s approach was people-centric and comparing it to Machiavelli’s king-centric approach shows ignorance about his work.

End Notes

I owe the following to Bhoopendra Sinha.

1 ’यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत I

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम’ II *भगवद्गीता* (4/7)

’परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् I

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे’ II *भगवद्गीता*(4/8)

[Whenever righteousness is on the wane and there is ascendency of unrighteousness, then I give to Myself suitable forms of manifestation.] *Bhagwadgita* (4/7)

[For the protection of the pious and for rooting out the evil, and also for re-establishing righteousness, I manifest myself in every age.] *Bhagwadgita* (4/8)

The very same thought has been stated in Awadhi language in Ramacharitmanas by Goswami Tulsidas as thus:

’जब जब होइ धरम की हानी, बाढेहिं असुर अधम अभिमानी

तब तब धरि प्रभु मनुज सरीरा, हरहिं कृपानिधि सज्जन पीरा’

Manifestation of God as an Avatar is to save human beings in situations where their own efforts would woefully fall short of the requirement. Kautilya, as you have rightly stated, believed in human effort and ingenuity to shape his own destiny. Hence he laid down an elaborate system of national security,viz., freedom from fear and external aggression.

2 Sihag (2014, Chapter 18) presents Kautilya’s power equation as follows:

P = A (J, H) (K)λ (E Lm) (1- λ)  (1)

RP1 = P1 / P2 (2)

Where P1 and P2 = powers of king one and king two respectively, A= efficiency parameter, H = experience and analytical skills of the advisers in utilizing the information made available through intelligence, K = horses, elephants, chariots and armaments, E = enthusiasm and training, Lm= military strength, J = level of public support for a just and kind-hearted king and RP1 = relative power of nation one. Kautilya believed that H was the most important factor in enhancing national security. He argued that power bred more power: a stronger king obtained more easily the support of other kings and received a larger share from joint campaigns

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