

DEFINING STRATEGIC CULTURE

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All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of policy carried out by other means.

— Carl Philipp Gottlieb von Clausewitz

For decades, students of international relations have been unable to explain the puzzling behaviour of states in various situations, at times totally defying logic and realism. Some cases that can be recalled are: the Soviet Union's responses during the Cold War era; Pakistan's decision to carry out an intrusion in Kargil or join the Global War on Terror, to fight terrorism while encouraging it as state policy all along; Germany's reluctance to assist the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in imposing a UN authorised flight ban over Bosnia; the presence of the so-called rogue states in the world community like Cuba, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan and North Korea, which are accused of violating international norms of behaviour by, for example, sponsoring international terrorism, committing human rights abuses and seeking weapons of mass destruction.

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National strategies and approaches to warfare are, to a significant extent, culturally determined. The concept of national “ways of war” dates back to the 1930s, when Basil H. Liddell Hart theorised that there was a “British Way in Warfare”. The term “Strategic Culture” was, however, coined by Jack Snyder way back in 1977, while analysing Soviet military strategy, where he felt that the origins of Soviet strategic thinking had a deeply rooted influence from Soviet history¹ and the leaders of the Soviet Union did not behave according to any “rational choice theory”. Alistair Johnston in his study on the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), in China, also found an overarching influence of societal characteristics on state behaviour. Similar links between culture and national security policy behaviour were noticed in the study of French military doctrines, Indian strategy and even a distinct, identifiable strategy of the Latin American states. So much so, that specialised studies were carried out on the behaviour of Japan and Germany, in the post Cold War era, to see if they would strive to follow their natural path of military dominance.

The concept of strategic culture, born at the intersection of history, geography, values, beliefs and politics, comes to explain the state behaviour in the international arena in strict correspondence with the national features.² The concept of strategic culture captures the essence of inter-state behaviour, looking at the set of preferences that states have in using one foreign policy tool or another.³ The term strategic culture is derived from the two terms strategy and culture and is, therefore, an amalgamation of both terms which are distinct in their own right.

The aim of the paper is to, firstly, define the term strategic culture and study the levels, kinds and elements of strategic culture.

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1. Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, R-2154-AF, September 1977), p. 4.
 2. Costel Cain, *Strategic Culture: Operationalisation and Determinants* (ABD University of Tennessee), p. 1.
 3. Ibid.

DEFINING STRATEGY

It is said that strategy is the art that man invented three thousand years ago, when the “voices of the Gods” stopped guiding him in the decision-making process! It is the greatest “winning tool” that man ever invented as it enables the practitioners to see clearly the future of any encounter they undertake, whilst reacting rationally and consciously without the need for intuition or guesswork.

The word ‘strategy’ is *ubiquitous* and can be found in all walks of life, from the highest levels of governmental, military and corporate organisations, down to one’s day-to-day affairs. It means so many things, to so many people, that it is difficult to have a meaningful discussion about strategy unless the term is defined clearly.

Many different definitions are possible for the word strategy, obviously depending on the context of its use, but on a broader plane, strategy can be defined as a plan of action, designed to achieve a particular goal. Strategy is not planning, as planning deals with situations in a controlled environment, whereas strategy deals with situations in an uncontrolled environment, where the conscious mind is in action when facing a challenge. Strategy is a pattern in a stream of actions over time; therefore, it can be considered to be an art, not a science and implies active participation in the creation of the future that we desire.

The word strategy has military connotations, because it derives from the Greek word *strategos* which means ‘a general’ as also *stratego* which means to ‘to plan the destruction of one’s enemies through effective use of resources.’ From the military point of view, it can be defined differently as the art of analysing, projecting and directing campaigns or even the art of the General in the battlefield; “It is the art of the Conscious Mind”; therefore, it is, “A style of thinking; a conscious and deliberate process; an intensive implementation system; the art of ensuring future success.”

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All definitions involve an integration of the past and present, to create the future, as can be seen in Chandler's definition, "Strategy is the determinant of the long-term goals of the enterprise"; and Andrews's definition, "Strategy is the pattern of objectives, purposes, or goals and plans for achieving these goals." Some of the important timeless masterpieces on strategy and strategic thought include:

- Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* written in China in the 6th century BC which was an influential book on strategy and had a significant impact on Chinese history and culture, and even proliferated to the West in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Kautilya's *Arthashastra* which was written approximately 300 years later in the 3rd century BC was a brilliant and comprehensive treatise on all aspects of international relations, intelligence and good governance. Kautilya was a mastermind, chief mentor and a minister who helped the first Emperor of India, Chandragupta Maurya, to extend his kingdom to the whole of India and beyond up to Afghanistan. The concept of *Mandala*, the system of developing and preserving international relations, was perfected in the *Arthashastra* for the first time.
- Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written in 1513 was a political treatise that examined the acquisition, perpetuation, and use of political power in the Western world. According to Machiavelli, the greatest moral good was a virtuous and stable state, and actions to protect the country were, therefore, justified even if they were cruel. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* to prove his proficiency in the art of the state, offering advice on how a prince might gain and keep power.
- *The Book of Five Rings* by the Samurai Warrior Miyamoto Mushashi, written in 1645, is considered a classic treatise on military strategy, much like Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.
- Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*, one of the most important treatises on strategy ever written, was published in 1832. In the book, he integrates politics and social and economic issues, as some of the most important factors in deciding the outcomes of a war.

LEVELS OF STRATEGY

Any nation's strategy is dependent on the nation's aim. The common man, although affected by this strategy, is far removed from the thinking process of the formulation of any such strategy. Citizens are more concerned about their day-to-day activities and would hardly be concerned about, or able to devote time to think about, defence and foreign policy or power politics. However, as far as economic policies are concerned, as these have a direct and immediate bearing on an individual's day-to-day living, they are more conscious and aware of their implications, and the national strategy in this regard. This is probably common to most nations except perhaps states where stability and security is threatened in a way which affects citizens personally, as in war-torn nations. The different levels of the strategy of any nation that flows from the national aim are given below.

Grand strategy comprises the "purposeful employment of all instruments of power available to a security community."

Grand Strategy

The art of employing all the resources of a nation or coalition of nations, to achieve the objects of war (and peace) can be called a grand strategy. The development of a nation's grand strategy may extend across many years or even multiple generations. Grand strategy comprises the "purposeful employment of all instruments of power available to a security community."⁴ Grand strategy is typically directed by the political leadership of a country, with inputs from the most senior military officials. Because of its scope and the number of different people and groups involved, grand strategy is usually a matter of public record, although the details of implementation are often concealed.

Military grand strategy includes calculations of economic resources and manpower. Issues of grand strategy typically include the choice of *primary* versus *secondary* theatres in war, the distribution of resources among the

4. Gray Colin: *War, Peace and International Relations - An Introduction to Strategic History* (Oxon: Routledge 2007), p. 283.

various services, the general types of armaments manufacturing to be favoured, and which international alliances best suit national goals. It also includes moral resources, sometimes called the national will. Grand strategy has considerable overlap with foreign policy, but focusses primarily on the military implications of policy.

Other Levels

Political Strategy: The strategy related to the business of the government: the control of people living in a city, state, nation or the world could be termed as political strategy. This is a plan to improve the chances of success for policy adoption and implementation.

Economic Strategy: The strategy of the nation or state, towards formulation of its macroeconomic policies and programmes that have a bearing on its domestic and international aspects of economic management can be termed as its economic strategy.

Military Strategy: This can be defined as, “The art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or the threat of force.” The predominant political strategy of nations is the military strategy. In warfare, coordinated application of all the forces of a nation to achieve a goal can be termed as *military strategy*. In contrast to tactics, strategy’s components include a long-range view, preparation of resources, and planning for the use of those resources before, during, and after an action. In other words, how a battle is fought is a matter of tactics: the terms that it is fought on and whether it should be fought at all is a matter of strategy. Military strategy is a policy implemented by military organisations to pursue desired strategic goals. Strategy is ‘*the art of the general*’. It is broad, long range and far-reaching. In part, it is about the preparations made before battle, before the enemy is engaged. But it is also about avoiding battle and making combat unnecessary. It is as much about destroying the enemy’s will to fight as it is about destroying the enemy in a fight.

ELEMENTS OF STRATEGY

The father of modern strategic study, Carl von Clausewitz, defined military strategy as “the employment of battles to gain the end of war.” Liddell Hart’s definition put less emphasis on battles, defining strategy as “the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy.” The elements of strategy have been described differently by different scholars depending on their fields of work. Sun Tzu in the *Art of War* describes them as mission, climate, ground, leadership and methods while others have listed between five to eight elements. The ones relevant to the use of strategy to project power (military) are mentioned below:

- **Goal:** Every strategy must have a clearly defined goal which ideally should be simple, long-term and capable of motivating the effort.
- **Plan:** The existence of a directional idea to achieve the goal is crucial. Once the direction is set, it becomes possible to take decisions in a consistent manner with regard to strategy.
- **Resources:** The focussing of all resources, efforts and enthusiasm in the agreed direction is a necessity. This element is the most often violated principle of effectiveness. When working for a goal, the need is to make a commitment as an organisation to that direction. That means efforts within the group must be concentrated on that particular direction.
- **Leadership:** For any strategy to be successful, the presence of a good leader is a must. Only with the directions of the leader can the organisation know which way it is headed.

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EMPLOYING STRATEGY

The employment of strategy can essentially be described by the five P’s i.e. for *Planning* to achieve one’s objectives, forming a *Perspective*, vision or direction, as a *Ploy* or a crafted plan, to obtain a particular *Position* or decision or as a *Pattern* in a sequence of events.

There are various definitions of culture which could be derived from anthropology, archaeology, history, psychology, sociology and modern popular cultural studies.

Culture is a way of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving. It is: shared, and adaptation, and constantly changing. A person's cultural identity is based on traits and values that are learned as part of our ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, socioeconomic level, primary language, geographical region, place of residence, and disabilities.

— Gollnick and Chinn, 1994.

DEFINING CULTURE

Sir Edward B. Tylor wrote in 1871 that “culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” A UNESCO document of 2002 states that culture is the “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” There are various definitions of culture which could be derived from anthropology, archaeology, history, psychology, sociology and modern popular cultural studies.⁵ Culture consists of shared decision rules, recipes, standard operating procedures, and decision routines that impose a degree or order on individuals and group conception of their relationship to their environment. Culture (from the Latin *cultura* stemming from *colere*, meaning “to cultivate”) is a term that has different meanings.

Culture is a study of achievement and development or the higher aspects of civilisation. Sometimes, ‘a culture’ is referred to as ‘a society’ which is often imprecise, since it is extremely difficult to define an entire population as having distinctive cultural characteristics. Culture may also refer to a system of values, ideas, and behaviours which may be associated with a social or national group (e.g., African American, Oriental or Indian culture). The minority cultures

5. Jeannie L. Johnson, Kerry M. Kartchner, and Jeffrey A. Larsen, eds., *Strategic Culture and WMD* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.8.

which lie within a larger dominant culture are often described as sub-cultures. Societies rely on cultures that have unwritten rules and guidelines.

In the humanities field, these include a study of achievements in the arts, architecture, music, dance, literature, history, and philosophy to name a few. In 1952, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn compiled a list of 164 definitions of “culture” in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. However, the word “culture” is most commonly used in three basic senses: excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities which is also known as

‘high culture’; an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief; behaviour, that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning; and the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution, organisation or group.

When the concept first emerged in 18th and 19th century Europe, it connoted a process of cultivation or improvement, as in agriculture or horticulture. In the 19th century, it came to refer first to the betterment or refinement of the individual, especially through education, and then to the fulfillment of national aspirations or ideals. In the mid-19th century, some scientists used the term “culture” to refer to a universal human capacity. In the 20th century, “culture” emerged as a concept central to anthropology, encompassing all human phenomena that are not purely results of human genetics.

Strategic Thinking

In the view of F. Graetz, strategic thinking and planning are “distinct, but interrelated and complementary thought processes” that must sustain and support one another, for effective strategic management. The strategy of a nation or state is a product of the strategic thought. While strategic planning can be described as systematic programming of pre-identified strategies, strategic thinking involves a more integrated perspective of the state’s

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future. In strategic thought, the question is not “What?” but “Why?” In strategic thinking, the future is predicted.

Done well, the careful analysis of strategic culture could help policymakers establish more accurate and empathetic understandings of how different actors perceive the game being played, reducing uncertainty and other information problems in strategic choice. Done badly, the analysis of strategic culture could reinforce stereotypes about strategic dispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures.

— Alistair Iain Johnston

WHAT IS STRATEGIC CULTURE?

Strategic culture has been defined by various scholars over the last few decades:

- *Jack Snyder (1977)* defined strategic culture as, “The sum total of ideas, conditional emotional responses, and patterns of behaviour that members of the strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other.”
- *Ken Booth (1979)* asserts that “strategic culture refers to a nation’s tradition, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to threat or use of force.”
- *Gray (1981)* initially defined strategic culture as “referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, which derives from the national historical experience, from aspirations for responsible behaviour in national terms. In his later studies in 1999, he defined strategic culture as “the persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particularly geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience.”
- *Charles Kupchan (1994)* points out that “strategic culture is distinguishable from elite beliefs in that it is based on images and symbols, not on logic

and causal inference ... it refers to images that shape how the nation as a collective entity defines its well-being and conceives of its security."

- *Alistair Iain Johnston (1995)* portrays strategic culture as "an ideational milieu which limits behavioural choices. Strategic culture is assimilated with the nation's or strategic community's identity and features which finally mould the state's behaviour. Strategic culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behaviour, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives."⁶
- *Rudra Chaudhuri (2008)* has defined strategic culture very comprehensively as the ideas, norms and patterns of behaviour regarding a state's strategic orientation that are shared across *strategic elites* and the *public* within a national community. Norms within the context of strategic culture concern the conditions under which the use of force is considered legitimate, such as the ends it is used for and the way its use is authorised domestically and internationally. Ideas concerning the state's role in the world and its perception of the global order, which has implications for the degree, to which it cooperates with other actors. And, finally, the established *pattern of behaviour*, which can be broadly understood as ways of discussing (societies), deciding (political actors) and doing things (armed forces) in matters of security and defence. Norms "are beliefs shared by a community about who they are, what the world is like, and given these two things, what they can and should do in given circumstances." They are "public beliefs that are institutionalised in community discourse, doctrine, policies and practice."⁷

Strategic culture could be in various fields, however, the one that is of concern is how the state views employment or use of force or the armed forces, in various situations to achieve national interests or state goals. Strategic culture directs the use of armed forces through the growth of

6. Ibid.

7. Rudra Chaudhuri, *Recovering Indian Strategic Culture*, The ISA Paper, March 2008, p.1.

Strategic culture then provides the decision-makers with a unique ordered set of choices from which to derive predictions about behaviour.

ideas, concepts, preferences and the internalisation and institutionalisation thereof by a political community. Strategic culture is what guides the use of armed forces as a policy instrument. The security community is defined as the group of national officials who have the power to make decisions in the foreign policy and security areas. Strategic culture then provides the decision-makers with a unique ordered set of choices from which to derive predictions about behaviour. Going to war is, thus, embedded in some measure of politico-military, cultural and institutional consensus on when and how to use the strategic instrument (denoting, hereafter, the use of the military instruments of policy). Irrespective of the kind of military operation(s) envisaged by political actors, strategic culture functions as an important catalyst since it provides the politico-military foundations for the use of the strategic instrument.

APPROACHES TO ANALYSING STRATEGIC CULTURE

Different scholars have approached the subject in different ways. The analysis or study of the strategic culture of a state or nation, being a complex subject, requires probing into the history and tracing a common string of thought which has been passed down from generations. Historical literature tends to be inconsistent and could have major gaps. The analysis must determine whether or not the strategic culture exists across *time* and across *actors* within society in such a way that it constitutes a dominant variable in decision-making. It must be understood that in the long history of nations or states, there is often a discontinuity in the strategy depending on various factors including tangible and intangibles like the end of an empire or during an invasion. There could also be a case of individual decision-making rather than a collectively shaped and shared strategic culture. The strategic culture of a nation or state can depend broadly on physical factors (geography, climate, natural resources, etc), political factors (historical experience, political system, beliefs, military organisations, etc) or socio-cultural factors (symbols, myths,

defining texts and even technology and generational change). The approaches to study strategic culture of any state or nation are:

- To carry out content analysis of writings, debates, thoughts and words of strategists, military leaders and national security elites as well as force structures, etc.
- To analyse the state's behaviour, by seeing how it interacted with other states in the world stage.

The set of tools that a state chooses to use in dealing with the other international actors reveals the type of strategic culture that a state has adopted. In this, strategic culture could be seen as a "consistent set of ranked preferences that persist across time and across strategic contexts" (Johnston 1995, 52). In this approach, strategic culture indicates the state's preference toward using a specific tool of foreign policy when that state chooses to intervene in a conflict between at least two other state actors. Thus, a state's conflict resolution techniques mirror the strategic culture.

The strategic culture of a nation or state can depend broadly on physical factors, political factors or socio-cultural factors.

There are painters who transform the sun into a yellow spot, but there are others who, thanks to their art and intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun.

— Pablo Picasso

GENRE OF SCHOLARS

- **First Generation (Late 1970s and beginning of 1980s):** The pioneering generation of scholars of strategic culture focussed primarily on the American and Soviet strategic cultures (Snyder 1977, Gray 1981, Jones, 1990) and attempted to explain why the two sides had different views on nuclear strategy. Jack Snyder, the first analyst who articulated a compact definition of the concept, argued that the American analysts failed to understand and predict the Soviet response to American Cold War policies. He puts this failure on the Americans' expectation that similar situations would lead to similar reactions on both sides and finds out that the Soviets' predilection for the offensive use of force is an expression

of the Russian authoritarian past. Gray felt that “Americans advance a nuclear strategy that emphasises that there are no victors in a nuclear war and also lack the ability to articulate a strategic thinking which would enable them to win the nuclear war” (Gray, 1981). This generation pointed out that strategic culture had a semi-permanent character (Snyder, 1977), and, importantly, historical heritage, geography, and national attitudes and beliefs, along with the military culture and the threats environment, impact strategic culture (Snyder, 1977; Jones, 1990). However, in this initial stage, the analysts *were not able to determine how much from strategy is owed to strategic culture* and also their simplified conclusions led them to narrow determinism. Finally, these first-generation theorists were *not able to date how far back in the past we should go to find the sources of strategic culture* and also to determine *the process which facilitates the transmission of strategic culture* in time (Johnston, 1995).

- **Second Generation (Second half of 1980s):** The second wave of scholars refined their predecessors’ arguments and raised different types of questions. Even they recognised the existence of a multitude of national strategic cultures generated as a product of multiple historical experiences; *their main concern was to evaluate the behaviour of foreign policy leadership*. They realised the difference between declaratory and operational strategy, that political elites manipulate the public discourse and that declaratory strategy may be used to legitimise the use of power against enemies or political challengers. When discussing operational strategy, however, they felt that things got complicated.
- **Third Generation 1990s:** With the development of new theories, such as constructivism in the 1990s, a new wave of theorists rediscovered the value of culture in security studies (Johnston, 1995; Katzenstein, 1996; Lapid, 1996; Wendt, 1996) that *paid considerable attention to issues like identity, tradition, culture etc.* This generation delineated normative relationships between national cultures and security policies in different areas of the globe, such as China (Johnston, 1995), France, Germany, Japan (Berger, 1996), and Latin America (Ebel, Taras, and Cochrane, 1996) and also *established a set of meaningful paths to approach this topic in a more scientific way*. According to Johnston

(1995), some scholars are preoccupied with the conceptualisation of the role played by a number of potential independent variables such as military culture, political-military culture, or organisational culture in particular strategic decisions. Similarly, there is no large agreement among scholars on what is to be analysed if the dependent variable is assessed. The set of choices includes behaviour, foreign policy, military doctrine, or strategic doctrine statements. Finally, among other things, *this generation of scholars considers that cultural values are less deeply rooted in historical practice, more in recent experiences.*

This dimension brings up the issues of how the major political documents of a state reflect matters like security, threats, means to combat threats.

DIMENSIONS OF STRATEGIC CULTURE

Political Dimension: This dimension brings up the issues of how the major political documents of a state reflect matters like security, threats, means to combat threats, etc., and by whom the political choices or decisions with regard to security are made. At this level, it is established that the relationship between domestic and external security and the threats to national security is prioritised.

Military Dimension: Military capabilities are relevant in the sense that they may give a specific status to a state and, thus, they lead to a particular type of behaviour in the world. Obviously, great powers may envisage a wider range of military activities in which they decide to involve themselves, as opposed to small powers, which do not have the freedom to choose between too many options. (Rynning, 2003). Of particular importance here are indicators such as military leadership, military doctrines, and the structure of the armed forces. The capability question refers also to the capacity of the armed forces to operate fast and to enjoy high mobility.

Institutional Dimension: Lastly, the institutional dimension is about relating the foreign policy tools of a state with international events having security implications. The major role of institutions is to put the strategic cultural values in practice, because without institutions, the values

cannot be translated directly into specific security policies or behaviour. Simultaneously, institutions operationalise the coordination between civilian and military aspects of security.

KINDS OF STRATEGIC CULTURE

The strategic culture of a nation or state can broadly be categorised as strong or weak depending upon its inclination to use force as a tool of its foreign policy in inter-state disputes. Comparative strategic culture is a concept that has been around under other guises for some time, but has gained in specific interest for political theorists and analysts, since the late Seventies. A number of specific kinds of strategic culture can be identified in different states. Sub-cultures or a mix of different cultures can also be seen in different cases:

Theocratic: The strategic culture that is associated with a state or country that is ruled by religious leaders or a form of government in which a god or deity is recognised as the state's supreme civil ruler, or in a higher sense, a form of government in which a state is governed by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided e.g. Iran after the Shah's reign.

Mercantile: Strategic culture which is mainly influenced by trade and commercial affairs e.g. the British colonial empire.

Frontier Expansionist: A form of strategic culture of those who believe in increasing the size of the country/state or business e.g. Germany and Japan during World War II.

Imperial Bureaucratic: The strategic culture of a state or an empire with a complicated official bureaucracy e.g. imperialistic Russian strategic culture, Chinese dynastic rule.

Revolutionary Technocratic: A strategic culture, driven by technocrats or experts in science, engineering and wielding a lot of power in politics. USA, Korea and, to some extent, Japan post World War II.

Marauding: A strategic culture displayed by state actors who went around in search of things to steal or people to attack. The Vikings, Huns and Mongols are good examples of such culture.

Omniscient Patrician: A strategic culture where members of the high class of society display an all knowing attitude and control and formulate strategies e.g. China post dynastic rule.

STRATEGIC CULTURE: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The concept of strategic culture is fairly new. In its dynamic dimension, it is used to determine why states have chosen certain national security policies instead of others and also to clarify the permanence or change of those policies. Interestingly, strategic cultures may penetrate each other; they can coexist simultaneously in the same area. A nation's strategic culture flows from its geography and resources, history and experience, and society and political structure.⁸ It represents an approach that a given state has found successful in the past. Although not immutable, it tends to evolve slowly. It is no coincidence, for example, that Britain has historically favoured sea power and indirect strategies, or that it has traditionally eschewed the maintenance of a large army. Israel's lack of strategic depth, its small but educated population, and technological skills have produced a strategic culture that emphasises strategic preemption, offensive operation, initiative, and, increasingly, advanced technology.⁹ As per Klien (1988), strategic culture is a product of historical experiences. Since these experiences are varied across different states, these states exhibit different strategic cultures. A brief analysis of the strategic cultures of the major powers of the world, India's neighbourhood as well as of Britain (during the colonial period) and Israel which is a unique case is given below.

USA

As per Peter Katzenstein, the US security policies and strategies have an overarching impact from its strategic geography and history of being spatially isolated as well as secure. In the words of Colin S. Gray, "That

8. Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Ch.5.

9. Michael I. Handel, "The Evolution of Israel's Strategy: The Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security" in Williamson Murray, Mac Gregor Knox and Alvin Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Strategic Culture referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, derived from perception of the national historical experience, aspiration for self-characterisation....and from all of the mainly American experiences (of geography, political philosophy, of civic culture and 'way of life' that characterised an American citizen."¹⁰

The US, in its National Defence Strategy, has outlined an active, layered approach to the defence of the nation and its interests. It seeks to create conditions conducive to respect for sovereignty of nations, a secure international order favourable to freedom, democracy and economic opportunity. The strategy promotes close cooperation with others around the world that is also committed to these goals. Further, it lays down strategic objectives, and how to accomplish them as well as guidelines for strategic planning and decision-making.

The US was a liberal democracy in the latter half of the 20th century and adopted an offensive strategy of global anti-Communist containment. Homeland security has been the most important ideational basis of US security policy throughout the nation's history. Military operations led by the United States are said to have been influenced by "technological fetishism, casualty aversion and legal pragmatism."¹¹

Russia

The Russian Empire historically adopted an expansionist, offensive approach to dealing with threats. The Russian strategic culture since its existence as Imperial Russia to the USSR up to the 1980s had a militarised and martial culture comparable to that of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. "The former Soviet military was said to exhibit a preference for preemptive, offensive use of force that was deeply rooted in Russia's history of expansionism and internal autocracy".¹² The strategic culture in Russia was highly influenced by political culture. The continuity of this kind of strategic culture appears

10. Colin S. Gray, "National Style in Strategy: The American Example", *International Security*, 6, No.2, Fall 1981, p.22.

11. Farrell, "National Style in Strategy: The American Example", *International Security*, 6:2, Autumn 1981, p.8.

12. Alistair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", *International Security*, 19:4, Spring 1995, p. 32.

to be shaped by its geographic location, tribal history, multi-ethnicity and authoritarianism.

Fritz W. Ermath, in his paper, "Russia's Strategic Culture: Past Present, and ...in Transition" defines strategic culture in the Russian case as, "It is the body of broadly shared, powerfully influential, and specially enduring attitudes, perceptions, dispositions, and reflexes about national security in its broadest sense, both internal and external, that shape behaviour and policy. For all its high degree of militarisation, Russian strategic culture is not simply co-terminous with its military culture, i.e., deep attitudes about how military power should be shaped, maintained, and used. Strategic culture in the Russian case is very much influenced by political culture, how political power is defined, acquired, legitimised, and used; by foreign policy culture, how the outside world is regarded and addressed; and by economic culture – although the latter is, in the Russian case, more a product of the other influences than itself a source of influence." Soviet military doctrine during the Cold War has been explained by looking at "pre-existing cultural beliefs" that led to the institutionalisation of Soviet "strategic inferiority".¹³

China

China as a large bureaucratic authoritarian empire that was exposed to external threats from nomadic groups from the north and west, has eschewed according to some, expansionist, offensive doctrines to external threats.

In the context of China, Andrew Scobell of the Strategic Studies Institute, in his paper on "China and Strategic Culture" claims that China's actual strategic culture is the result of the interplay between Confucian and *realpolitik* strands. Chinese elites believe strongly that their country's strategic tradition is pacifist, non-expansionist, and purely defensive but, at the same time, are able to justify virtually any use of force, including offensive and preemptive strikes as defensive in nature.¹⁴ Chinese strategic culture has been situated in what Alistair Johnston calls the "*Parabellum*", or "hard *realpolitik* view of security," that is, a product of Chinese historical experiences.

13. Ibid.

14. Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York: Cambridge University Press), Ch.2.

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According to Li Jijun, former Deputy Director of the Academy of Military Sciences, "Culture is the root and foundation of strategy. Strategic thinking, in the process of its evolutionary history, flows into the mainstream of a country's or a nation's culture. Each country's or nation's strategic culture cannot but bear the imprint of cultural traditions, which in a subconscious and complex way, prescribes and defines strategy making." He further adds that "China's ancient strategic culture is rooted in the philosophical idea of "unity between man and nature", which pursues overall harmony between man and nature and harmony among men"

Pakistan

Peter R. Lavoy, in his report on Pakistan's strategic culture brought out that "Pakistan is one of the least secure countries on the planet. As a reflection of its obsession with security, Pakistan spends close to \$ 4 billion per year on defence, which ranks 28th highest in the world. More tellingly, it ranks 19th in the world in terms of military expenditure as a percentage of its GDP (at just 5 percent). All other indicators of military capability show that Pakistan has one of the world's largest and best equipped armed forces, which, of course, possess a steadily growing arsenal of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. But statistics hardly do justice to the country's intense feeling of insecurity, which is rooted deeply in the past. Emerging out of British Colonial India as a homeland for a sizeable portion of the region's Muslim population, one could say that Pakistan was born insecure".¹⁵ The key elements of Pakistan's strategic culture listed by him are opposition to Indian hegemony, primacy of defence requirements, nuclear deterrence, acceptable but not reliance on outside assistance, stability on Pakistan's borders and identification with conservative Islamic causes.

15. Peter R. Lavoy, "Pakistan's Strategic Culture", *DTRA*, October 31, 2006, p.8.

The fact that Pakistan was a new state, carved out of India on the basis of Muslim separatism, contributed to its insecurity. Pakistan's abhorrence of India's commanding role in view of its historical experiences and the distrust of the latter is deeply ingrained into Pakistan's strategic culture. Ever since its formation, Pakistan's military has played a dominant role in its politics, either directly or indirectly. Pakistan's unique strategic culture is, therefore, shaped by its military in pursuit of its ideological and political goals.

As per Ms Shalini Chawla, a Research Fellow at the Centre of Air Power Studies and an expert on Pakistan affairs, "Its strategy has relied heavily on irregular guerrilla warfare conducted as a covert war (through guerrilla fighters, terrorist and religious extremists, etc.) and external support for building military power. Nuclear weapons reinforced the confidence and flexibility of tactics in the operational role of covert war which more often than not has been backed at a selected time by overt military offensive."

Pakistan's support for the Taliban was a result of its strategic culture that had developed over years that saw religious extremist forces as good and reliable tools of policy, more precisely, its security policy. Pakistan's role in the "Global War Against Terror" was a result of a strange paradox in its strategic culture as external pressure and a failing economy conflicted with its long held security perceptions.

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Britain

The British Empire at its height was the largest empire in history and, for over a century, was the foremost global power comprising dominions, colonies, protectorates, mandates, and other territories, and covered more than 13,000,000 square miles (33,670,000 km²)—approximately a quarter of the Earth's total land area. At the peak of its power, it was often said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." During the Age of Discovery in the

15th and 16th centuries, Spain and Portugal pioneered European exploration of the globe and in the process established large overseas empires. Though a relative latecomer in comparison to Spain and Portugal, England had been engaged in colonial settlement in Ireland since the Norman invasions in 1171. The 16th century plantations of Ireland, run by English colonists, were a precursor to the colonies established on the North Atlantic seaboard. Envious of the great wealth being amassed by Spain and Portugal in 1578, Queen Elizabeth I displayed a '*marauding*' type of strategic culture by granting a patent to Humphrey Gilbert for discovery and overseas exploration with the intention of engaging in piracy and establishing a colony in North America.

In 1603, King James VI of Scotland ascended to the English throne and in 1604, negotiated the Treaty of London, ending hostilities with Spain. Now at peace with its main rival, England's attention shifted from preying on other nations' colonial infrastructure to the business of establishing its own overseas colonies. The British Empire began to take shape during the early 17th century, with the English settlement of North America and the smaller islands of the Caribbean, and the establishment of a private company, the English East India Company, to trade with Asia. A series of wars in the 17th and 18th centuries with the Netherlands and France left England as the dominant colonial power in North America and India. The British strategic culture thereafter displayed a change towards a *mercantile and frontier expansionist culture*.

Israel

Ever since the Jews occupied the so-called 'Promised Land' and formed the state of Israel in 1948, they have been surrounded by enemies on all sides and their strategic culture has been shaped by the need for survival in a hostile neighbourhood. Israel's strategic culture has been carefully crafted over the last six decades and shaped by continuous struggles and wars over land.

As per Gregory F. Giles, Israel is a strategic culture in transition and the dominant or hegemonic strategic culture might be summed up accordingly:

The Jewish people have been subject to exile and persecution since antiquity, as manifested in various pogroms, particularly in the late 19th century and the Nazi holocaust which claimed the lives of some six million Jews. In order to preserve their religion, ideological political, cultural and physical existence as a people, Jews require a national homeland. The homeland is their ancestral Israel. With conflicting claims over their land from Palestinians who are backed politically, militarily and economically by the larger Arab World (and, increasingly, Iran), the State of Israel is under constant threat of annihilation. Thus, Israel must be defended by all the resources the state can bring to bear, particularly in citizenry and technological base, which must be organised into qualitatively superior military forces.¹⁶

India

If one were to categorise or typecast Indian strategic culture against the kinds mentioned earlier, it would be evident that India was never theocratic on the lines of Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc where Islamic law dictates all the activities of the state or the Vatican where the legal system is rooted in Canon Laws, and subject to the dictates of the Pope and changes to Canon Laws made by conferences of senior clergy. And one of the main reasons for this remains that Hinduism is basically non-proselytising in nature.

The Indian civilisation cannot be described as mercantile as the only such recorded efforts were during the brief period of the Chola Dynasty. Neither does it fit into the frontier expansionist category as Indians have never displayed any keenness to go beyond the Indian subcontinent, which is also amply evident from the fact of history: there were no Indian travellers who visited other dynasties or civilisations. Imperialist culture, to a certain extent, existed during the Mughal era albeit within the subcontinent only. With India having missed the Industrial Revolution altogether, it obviously did not fit into the revolutionary technocratic kind of strategic culture either. India's strategic culture, therefore, seems to fit into the last category i.e. omniscient patrician more than any of the other categories listed earlier.

16. Gregory F. Giles, "Continuity and Change in Israel's Strategic Culture," *DTRA*, June 18, 2002, pp. 1-2

State practices are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites.

CONCLUSION

Any nation's strategy is dependent on the nation's aim. The common man, although affected by this strategy, is far removed from the thinking process of the formulation of any such strategy. Citizens are more concerned about their day-to-day activities and are not very concerned about, or devote time to think about, defence and foreign policy or power politics.

This is probably common to most nations except perhaps those states where stability and security is threatened in a way which affects citizens personally, for example, in war-torn nations. According to Rudra Chaudhuri, "State practices are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites."

In this paper, an effort was made to define and understand the terms strategy and culture separately as well as see the interplay in the term 'strategic culture'. The different facets of strategic culture, including level, elements, factors, dimensions and types of strategic culture were described. Also, the strategic cultures of other states were briefly discussed and typecast. Initially, the strategic cultures of global and prominent powers were discussed and thereafter states in India's neighbourhood were studied. The strategic culture of Israel which is a unique case was also studied. Lastly, an effort was also made to see the traits displayed by the Indian strategic culture.