

In the Study of Sun Tzu's Strategic Catechism and Contemporary Calculated Tactics: Locating the Ancient in the Modern

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Abstract

Throughout history, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* has been regarded as one of the greatest masterpieces in the history of military strategy. It is also one of the most read in Strategic Studies. Of greater interest is the fact that as it is relevant to the military, so it is to the civilians who are engaged in calculated actions in their daily activities. Although a masterpiece of the old, the book and its content remain as recurrent as they were. Imperatively, therefore, this paper takes a critical look at the arguments and strategic advice of Sun Tzu with particular reference to their relevance in contemporary military formations, politics, economy, relationships, etc. Thus, for effective analysis, Power Theory, secondary data and content analytical approach were used. The paper argues that, in as much as, *The Art of War* was written centuries ago, that its relevance is still very current and applicable to all facets of life.

Key words: Military, Strategy, Tactics, War, Power

Introduction

By fate or design, the history of mankind has been a profile in peace and war. In the olden days and to some extent, today, war is the ultimate option in the authoritative allocation of resources among states because, even in the most pacific and convivial situations, man is preoccupied with the mode of survivalist strategy to adopt in order to ward off impending enemies; because his desires, needs and expectations are insatiable. Obviously, the more the needs, the more the aggressive tendencies. It is stating the obvious that as it is to man in interaction, so it is to the State as an extension of the former. And with the large number of states in global politics, the world is occupied by unending struggles for scarce resources.

However, today's world has seen a lot of systemic changes that has, to a great extent, curtailed those animalistic tendencies that typified relations at the ancient times. The days of *State of Nature*, typified by frequent unbridled face-offs, have given way to coordinated arrangements that do not, anyway, mean that peace is now the permanent feature of relations among states.

The melodrama of self-assurance under trepidation still haunts nations so long as that *Hercules* loaded to full capacity with crude and sophisticated weapons of man and nature's destruction overhangs the nervous co-existence that has long become the pseudo-name of international and inter-states relations. This new threat in the form of ever present scientific weapons has continued to inspire face-offs between kingdoms, empires, regions and states.

In the face of all these threats and tribulations had been great men who were troubled by the challenges of their times as they were occupied troubled by how to either advance the course of man in the midst of threats or difficulties.

Interestingly, all the epochs had their own great men: Napoleon Bonaparte, Clausewitz, Pareto, Blutchter, Scipio Africanus, Hannibal, Fabianus, Niccollo Machiavelli, Mao Tse Tung, Shaka Zulu, etc. all aspired and were preoccupied by how best leaders and the led could be the greatest in their chosen careers and in their efforts to not only be the Masters of strategies, but dominators of their environments.

Thus, this study takes a critical look at the thoughts of Sun Tzu who was one of those known greatest strategic thinkers. It also studies how his thoughts have influenced strategic positions of his era and the current global strategic realities with view to establishing their relevance in tackling cotemporary difficulties.

Conceptual clarifications

In the light of the nature of the study, Power Theory remains the most attractive in the analysis of the strategic thoughts of Sun Tzu in contemporary analysis because Power is a recurrent decimal in international politics. Today, there is contention on the constituent of power politics taking the fact that power is regarded as a central issue in international politics, and that the propelling force in state's relations is the acquisition and exercise of power. It has been posited that a state can succeed in international politics if it makes the acquisition of power its central, and or immediate aim. The above suggestion tries to view power from military perspective which Sun Tzu shared.

The central proposition of the Power Theory is that at the international arena, 'might is right'. A powerful nation is an influential nation. This is evident when we say that country A is more powerful or stronger than country B. In history so far, the tag "Power" has been averred to states that won successful military victories and many victorious countries in the past cannot deny the fact that Sun Tzu's military strategies principles were not valuable to them.

Imperatively, Knorr (1973:104) sees military power “as a relation among states that permit one government to induce another to behave in a way which the later would not have chosen freely”. Traditionalists such as Machiavelli and Morgenthau regard power as both an end in itself and a means to an end. Morgenthau (1975) sees it as “man’s control over the minds and actions of others” He further, stressed that power in the political sense refers to the mutual relation of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large. Therefore power covers all social relationship which serves the end, from physical violence to the most psychological ties by which one mind controls another.

To Frankel (1963), power is the “ability to get one’s wishes carried out despite opposition, the ability to influence the actions of others in accordance with one’s own ends”. No doubt, Giddens (1984) believes just as Sun Tzu to the effect that “power is not inherently oppressive, power is simply the ability to make a difference or the capacity to achieve outcomes and is not as such, an obstacle to freedom and emancipation but is their very medium”. Thus having power, then is, the sine qua non of being able to act as a morally responsible human being. To Tzu, with power, one can conquer more powers and win more influence and this he demonstrated through his work, *The Art of War*.

Thus, with power at the whims and caprices of the leader, war becomes an attractive option to garner more powers while well defined tactics becomes its organizing principle. It is only he who exercises elements of power in whatever quantity that aspires to war because skills are what make a good war.

Military Strategy

The Military connotes mafias or man that handles gun in tactical way. It is to a large extent associate with soldiers and in its conventional approach-the generals. Strategy is a phenomenon that goes beyond mere tactics or plan and began with the rise of armies. As a term, it was first used by Count Guibert in 1779, but today, it has fallen into almost universal usage in social, political, economic, environmental and military studies (Onyemaechi, 2000:13). The word ‘strategy’ is from the Greek word, ‘strategos’, for ‘general’ or ‘leader of troops’ which was derived from the verb *stratigema* meaning to lead or command an army and indeed, from ancient to contemporary times, the military assumed almost the monopoly of large-scale planning for effective management (Ammer, 1989:225). Today, strategy is

diverse connecting almost all aspects of humanity hence, strategic sites, strategic thought, weapons, theatre, investment, plan, legal strategy, football strategy, market strategy, campaign strategy, strategic policies, planning, etc.

Conventionally, strategy is of two dimensions: active and passive but the active is more relevant here. Active strategy, more or less, consists of crisis management. Strategy is directed toward a designed situation. It is a policy science because of its scientific applications especially in nuclear exercises. Strategic Studies therefore, is the use of policy approaches to attain set objectives within target time and at the minimum cost possible (Akpuru-aja 1999:1). Its analysis then, is the process of evaluating, examining, cross-examining, measuring and interpreting strategic policies, decisions and laws.

Military strategy is a subset of national or grand strategy. It is a scientific knowledge which studies the conditions, and the nature of future war, the preparation and conduct, the services of the armed forces and the foundations for the material and technical support and leadership of the war and the armed forces (Harriet 1981; 118). As a broad plan of action on how to wage and win war, it is equally both offensive and defensive in character and does not do away with command, control, communication, intelligence, psychological balance and force. A doyen of strategic thoughts, Carl von Clausewitz, concludes that military strategy deals with the planning and conduct of campaigns, the movement and disposition of forces, and the deception of the enemy.

Sun Tzu and Military Strategy

Undoubtedly, many contemporary strategists, scholars of international relations, military generals, war-mongers, diplomats, military leaders amongst others, may not in a single sentence say who Sun Tzu was not to talk of his influence on the present day war-prone globe. The reason could be death of research.

The originality of Sun Tzu still remains controversial because of different perspectives in this direction which has resulted to many historians accepting and rejecting data with links to the nativity of Sun Tzu. Nevertheless, history is replete; Sun Tzu had originality. Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, there was a period in China known as the Age of Warring

States. This was an age of great conflict and uncertainty as states fought for survival and control of China. For those states to win, they sought for means of gaining advantage over their opponents and those with knowledge on strategy and leadership were specially sought after. It was during that time that there arose a general from the state of Ch'i known as Sun Tzu. His ability to win victories for his warlord gained him fame and power.

Historians have questioned whether or not Sun Tzu was an authentic figure. Traditional accounts place him in the Spring and Autumn Periods of China (722-481 BC) as a military General serving under King Helu of Wu, who lived C.544-496 BC. Modern Scholars accepting his historicity place the completion of *The Art of War* in the Warring States Period (476-221 BC), based on the descriptions of warfare in the text, and on the similarity of text's prose with other works completed in the early warring states period (Sawyer, 2007: 421-422). The oldest available sources disagree as to where Sun Tzu was born. The Spring and Autumn Annals states that Sun Tzu was born in Qi, while the Shiji states that Sun Tzu was a native of Wu (Sawyer, 2007: 151, 153). Both sources agree that Sun Tzu was born in the late Spring and Autumn Periods of China (772-481 BC) and that he was active as a General and Strategist, serving the King of Wu, King Helu, in the late sixth century BC, beginning around 512 BC.

One of the more well-known stories about Sun Tzu, taken from the Shiji, illustrates Sun Tzu's temperament as follows; before hiring him the King of Wu tested his skills by commanding him to train a harem of 180 concubines into soldier. Skillfully, he was able to finish the task to the satisfaction of the king (Bradford, 2000: 134-135). Simply put, he was an ancient Chinese military general, strategist, philosopher, mathematician, author and commander who was born C. 544 BC (traditional) and died C. 496 BC (traditional) while his famous work was *The Art of War*.

The Art of War and the Classical Chinese Era

The Art of War is an ancient Chinese Military *Treatise* that is attributed to Sun Tzu. It is acclaimed to be one of the oldest and most successful books on military strategy in the world. It has been the most famous and influential of Chinese Seven Military Classics: "for the last two thousand years it remained the most important military *Treatise* in Asia, where even the common people knew it by name" (Sawyer, 2007: 421-422). It has had an influence on Eastern military thinking, business tactics, and beyond. Some scholars believe that *The Art*

War was not completed until the subsequent Warring States period. Composed of thirteen Chapters, each of which is devoted to one aspect of warfare, it is said to be the definitive work on military strategies and tactics of its time, and is still read for its military insights.

Three words in the opening of the ‘Art of Strategy’ are very important. First, Strategy (strategy, tactics, martial art etc), second, Skill and third Study, signify that it is not an inborn quality or skill to have but a learned skill that must be studied in order to win over life’s conflict, in fact, in order to survive. This is why Sun Tzu emphasized the importance of positioning in military strategy, and that the decision to position an army must be based on both objective and conditions in the physical environment and the subjective beliefs of other competitive actors in that environment. He thought that strategy was not planning in the sense of working through an established list, but rather that it requires quick and appropriate responses to changing conditions. Planning works in a controlled environment, but in a changing environment, competitive plans collide, creating unexpected situations.

Interestingly, Sun Tzu provided what he called principal elements of winning a war which he outlined, thus:

- **Laying plans/the Calculations:** Here, the way, season, terrain leadership and management, are the five fundamental factors and by thinking, assessing and comparing these points, a commander (figured the other way round a country with hostile neighbours like Israel) can calculate its (her) chances of victory. Habitual deviation from these calculations is tantamount to failure via improper action. It is in this case you see deterrence and détente, nuclear parade and armament at work.
- **Waging War/the Challenge:** Here encourages the economy of warfare, and how success requires winning decisive engagement quickly. Sun Tzu advises that successful military campaigns require limiting the cost of competition and conflict. The World War II would have been waged had it being that some major powers encouraged the League of Nations.
- **Attack by Stratagem/the Plan of Attack:** Here lies the sources of strength as unity, not size, and essentially for any country or empire or kingdom to win a war, attack, strategy, alliances, army and cities ought not to be neglected.
- **Tactical Disposition/Positioning:** Illustrates the importance of defending existing positions until a Commander is capable of advancing from those positions in safety.

No country that engages in a war prays to lose but rather, to win. Therefore, Sun Tzu opines that “opportunities ought not to be created for the enemy”.

- **Energy/Directing:** explains the use of creativity and timing in building an army’s momentum. This is in line with the dictum, ‘time is of greater essence’. Today, modern technologies have made some countries super powers and Commanders of the global village.
- **Weak Points and Strong/Illusion and Reality:** It explains how an army’s opportunities come from the openings in the environment caused by the relative weakness of the enemy in a given area. Today, weak and weaker countries dance to the tune of stronger countries especially, the Third World economies.
- **Maneuvering/Engaging the Force:** Explains the dangers of direct conflict and how to win those confrontations when they are forced upon the Commander-or country.
- **Variation in Tactics/The Nine Variations:** Focuses on the need for flexibility in an army’s responses. It explains how to respond to shifting circumstances especially, change, during the time of peace and war. Countries are well-acquainted with this philosophy.
- **The Army on the March/Moving the Force:** Describes the different situations in which an army find itself as it moves through new enemy territories, and how to respond to these situations.
- **Terrain/Situational Positioning:** It looks at the three general areas of resistance (distance, dangers, and barriers) and the six types of ground positions that arise from them.
- **The Nine Situations/Nine Terrains:** Describes the nine common situations or stages in a campaign (combat readiness), from scattering to deadly, and the specific focus that a Commander will need in order to successfully navigate them.
- **The Attack by Fire/Fiery Attack:** Here explains the general use of weapons and the specific use of the environment as a weapon.
- **The Use of Spies/the Use of Intelligence:** Good information sources and intelligence (tact) dominate here. Spying today is known as a crime and breach of international laws in the nation-states relations and to some extent, the diplomatic Purse which some countries usually use in carrying gadgets across their borders.

Theory of Sun Tzu

Many Scholars have incorporated Sun Tzu into the world of Theorists. *The Art of War* is a systematic guide to strategy and tactics for rulers and commanders. The work discusses various maneuvers and the effect of terrain on the outcome of battles. It emphasizes the importance of gathering accurate information about the enemy forces, dispositions and development, and movements. One of the Sun Tzu's axioms says; "know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat".

The Sun Tzu's theory (Theory of Warfare) stresses the unpredictability of battle, the use of flexible strategies and tactics, the importance of deception and surprise, the close relationship between politics and military policy, and the high cost of war. He knows that both offensive and defensive wars are costly-natural and man-made resource. The major themes of the theory are thus: the futility of seeking hard and fast rules and the subtle paradoxes of success. The best battle according to him is "the battle that is won without being fought".

The theory laid down the essential rules of guerrilla tactics in the art of war. To him therefore:

all warfare are based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe that we are far away; when far away, we must make him (enemy) believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.

The Prime Principles of Sun Tzu's Military Strategy

For Sun Tzu, there are a number of principles a Commander or a country preparing or war etc should know and act upon when the need calls for them. Some Scholars and Analysts refer to them as Sun Tzu's Quotes. They are as follows:

- All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved
- All war is based on deception
- All war is deception
- "All warfare is based on deception".
- Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby, you can be the director of the opponent's fate.

- Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can?
- Confront them with annihilation, and they will then survive, plunge them into a deadly situation, and they will then live. When people fall into danger, they are then able to strive for victory
- For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill
- For them to perceive the advantage of defeating the enemy, they must also have their rewards
- He who is prudent and lies in wait for an enemy, who is not, will be victorious.
- Hence the General is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack
- If ignorant both your enemy and yourself, you are certain to be in peril.
- If our soldiers are not over-burdened with money, it is not because they have distaste for riches, if their lives are not unduly long; it is not because they are disinclined to longevity
- If you are not far from the enemy, make him believe you are near
- If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the results of a hundred battles
- Invincibility lies in the defence, the possibility of victory in the attacks
- In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact, to shatter and destroy it is not so good
- It is essential to seek out enemy agents who have come to conduct espionage against you and to bribe them to serve you. Give them instructions and care for them. Thus doubled agents are recruited and used
- It is only the enlightened ruler and the wise General who will use the highest intelligence of the army for the purpose of spying, and thereby they achieve great results (http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/sun_tzu.ht..).

By inference, if all nations, looking at the present day global village, are to apply all the above quotes (principles), one thinks that the global environment would be unsafe to live in. One may then opine without any fear of contradictions that what prompted Sun Tzu's

strategies was the type of environment he found himself as well as his profession. Probably, he never knew, in the Nigerian Parlance, that ‘Soldier go, Soldier come, Barrack remains’.

However, in his critical synthesis of Sun Tzu’s strategies as they concern modern warfare, McNeilly’ (2001) provided the following six principles:

- Win all without fighting: Achieving the objective without destroying.
- Avoid strength, attack weakness: striking where the enemy is most vulnerable.
- Deception and foreknowledge: winning the information war.
- Speed and preparation: moving swiftly to overcome resistance
- Shaping the enemy: preparing the Battlefield
- Character-based leadership: leading by example.

Many modern countries have applied these principles in one way or the other in the name of security and arms build-up. It then reminded us of the Roman Empire, the Mongol Empire, and the British Empire that then enlarged their coast at the detriment of the small empires. The problem which Sun Tzu refused to solve is who is an enemy?

As a matter of fact, many states simply see hostile ones as their enemies. For example, some of the Arab world associated with terrorism and fundamentalism are regarded as United State’s enemies. Israel, for example, sees the Middle East Arabs as her prime enemy. Based on the transactions over the Bakassi, Nigeria may unofficially see the Cameroon as an enemy. The suppositions may go on and on based on the uncertainty that beclouds all the states today.

Whichever way one looks at it, the goal of many nation-states today is to first, survive, then prosper, and the projection of national interest which encompasses power, influence, development etc. The puzzle is, if the goal of a country is to survive and prosper, then what is the goal of its strategy? Not far-fetched because Sun Tzu has provided a working answer: “your aim must be to take all under heaven intact. Thus, your troops are not worn out and your gains will be completed. This is the art of offensive strategy”. He cautiously advised thus:

- Now an army may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the low lands, so an army avoids strength and strikes weakness.

- Speed is the essence of war. Take advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness, travel unexpectedly
- To rely on rustics and not prepared is the greatest of crimes, to be prepared before hand for any contingency is the greatest of virtues.
- Therefore, those skilled in war bring the enemy to the field of battle and are not brought there by him.
- Look into the matter of his alliances and cause them to be severed and dissolved. If an enemy has alliances, the problem is grave and the enemy's position strong. If he has no alliances, the problem is minor and the enemy's position weak.
- Above all, he who knows the art of the direct, *cheng* and the indirect, *chi* approaches will be victorious.

A critical application of these principles explains the reason behind the loss of some major wars by powerful nations especially, the US experience in Vietnam.

The Impact of Sun Tzu's military strategy on Contemporary Global System

Influence on Military Strategy/Exercise

Many scholars, war strategist, historians and their likes, have argued that *The Art of War* has been one of the most popular works on military strategy in history. This, to some extent, means that almost all wars fought since the death of Sun Tzu has imprints of Sun Tzu's strategies. Some of those wars are: The Thirty Years War, Persian War, World 1 and II, U.S./Vietnam War, etc.

Sun Tzu's work is one of the most important collections of books in the Chinese literature and was included in the ancient Chinese civil service examinations. In many East Asia Countries, *The Art of War* was part of the syllabus for potential candidates of military service examinations. At a particular time in Italy, for instance, before any eligible employee got job in the public sector, he must obtain some military trainings in readiness for swift mobilization against the unpreparedness of an enemy.

During the Sengoku era in Japan, *Takeda Shingen* (1521–1573), a *Samurai* lord, was said to have become almost invincible in all battles without relying on fire arms because he was a good student of *The Art War*. The work was the inspiration for his famous battle standard *Furinkazan* (Wind, forest, fire and mountain), meaning fast as wind, silent as forest, ferocious

as fire and immovable as mountain. Scholars equally argue that the French translation of *The Art of War* may have influenced Napoleon. Leaders, as diverse as Mao Zedong, General Perves Musharraf, Von Nguyen Giap, Adolf Hitler and General Douglas Mac Arthur all claimed to have drawn inspirations from the work. It is said also that Mao and Josef Stalin both read the book while at war and that Mao and the Chinese Communists took many of the tactics used in fighting the Japanese and later, Chinese from *The Art of War*.

Griffith, a renowned translator, dedicated a Chapter to Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-Tung citing *The Art of War* as an influence on Mao's Guerilla warfare, the protracted war, and strategic problems of China's Revolutionary War. According to him, Mao's words on Tzu's book could be relevant here:

We must not belittle the saying in the book of Sun Wu Tzu, the great military expert to ancient China; "know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battle without disaster".

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Sun Tzu's arguments grew in popularity and saw practical use in Western societies. For example, reports have it that during the Vietnam War, some Vietcong Officers studied *The Art of War* and could recite entire passages off hand. Even in the Department of the Army in the United States' Command and General Staff College, the book has been a handy work for the continuing education of personnel. The work was even referred to during the planning of operation Desert Storm. The reason of its study and applicability might be because America has many potential adversaries, both in the forms of states and terrorist organizations. Each day, as technology progresses, the ability of these adversaries to inflict harm on the U.S military units, national infrastructure, technological advancement, peace build-up or civilians increase (see McNeilly 2001: 187).

Lessons abound of the military strategies of Sun Tzu. It did not only center on China, rather it cut across the entire world. Ancient Chinese military strategy evolved over thousands of years of conflict. As commanders rose and fell, the heart of their philosophies were saved for future generations. Those early lessons took written forms and were passed onto the ruling class. Eventually, they became the basis for strategic thinking in ancient China. And since the 11th century, those combined works are referred to as the *Seven Military Classics*. Included in these fundamental series is the celebrated Sun Tzu's work; *The Art of War*. Many scholars have undoubtedly agreed that book is the best known book on military strategy and tactics in the world.

The Art of War became the basis for foremost Asian Martial Arts. Martial Arts in this context, refers to arts and not modern day martial sport. Ancient martial arts were combat related. It involved the study of armed and unarmed combat where the effectiveness was often measured in life and death. Under the right guidance, today's martial arts training can be used effectively in self-defense situations. For example: in waging of wars, Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), and deterrence and/with other mechanisms. But unfortunately, however, some conventional trainings have a propensity to fail in the real world. It fails because the focus is on learning set techniques instead of learning how to apply them in concert with an overall strategy. Veterans of aggression and conflict have learned quickly that what looks good in the principles are as valid today as they were when it was first written. The beauty is also as radiant as it was and hearing Sun Tzu again is indeed, inspiring: "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat".

Sun Tzu's military strategies were applied in numerous ways during his time and after his death. Reports have it that Communist Chinese leader Mao Zedong partially credited his victory over Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang in 1948 to *The Art of War*. The work strongly influenced Mao's writings about Guerrilla Warfare, which further influenced communist insurgencies around the world. The defeat of America in the Vietnam War, more than any other event, brought Sun Tzu to the attention of the leaders of US Military. During the Persian Gulf War in the 1990s, both General Norman Schwarzkopf Jr. and General Colin Powell practiced Sun Tzu's principles of deception, speed, and attack on the enemy's weakness.

The Chinese push and eagerness towards becoming a super power in the 21st century is attributed to their reliance on the historical strategic lessons of the Sun Tzu's teachings. The work is a manual in the Chinese attempt to be a military might in the international politics. (See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wik/SunTzu>).

Sun Tzu's Influence outside the Military Profession

Apart from the enormous influence of the *Art of War* on the military and other aspects of warfare, it has imparted other fields of life. Since at least the 1980s, *The Art of War* has been applied to many competitive endeavours that do not involve actual combat. The book has gathered momentum in corporate culture; a number of business books have been written

applying its lessons to ‘Office Politics’ and ‘Corporate Strategy’. Many Japanese companies make the book required reading for their key corporate executives. It has also been applied, with much success to business and managerial strategies.

This great work has also been applied to political campaigns. Typical of such are political campaigns in most African countries that are full of jaywalking and legal tussles. Republican election strategist, Lee Atwater, had claimed he traveled everywhere with *The Art of War*. Its way to business is because business by definition, deals with competition as well as war: ‘no one wants or targets to lose’. Business is like warfare full of contest of wills; dynamic and fast-paced, based on both morale and immoral and deals with effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources. Many business moguls across the globe have found value in Sun Tzu’s teachings. It has also found its way into movies and sport across the world. For example, Australian Cricket Coach, John Bucharam, has once in time, handed out excerpts from the book to his players before a match against England in 2001. The book is also said to be a favourite of University of South Caroline football head Coach, Steve Spurrier.

Moreover, former Brazilian and Portuguese football Coach, Luiz Felipe Scolari, used the *The Art of War* to plot his football strategies. In the 2002 FIFA World Cup, he gave a copy to each of his players. In the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, he used the book to plan his team’s win against England. Some experts also interpreted the work as a guide for social strategies, such as establishing and maintaining social and romantic relationship. The book has also gathered influence amongst players of strategy games within, nationally and internationally.

Risk-taking is another related area Sun Tzu explored because that is an area where men and women tend to operate very differently; honestly, that is where Sun Tzu delivered very clearly. A student of war or General taking calculated risks is fundamental to him. He recognizes that as the architect of his victories. Sun Tzu wrote repeatedly of manipulative circumstances. In businesses, it has the capacity of providing insight into how to gain a decisive advantage by leveraging one’s strengths and assets to craft and execute effective strategies. It helps one to understand and develop the character and tenacity necessary to make major achievements in life. Most importantly, this Chinese Philosopher-General showed how to do it in ways least expected. He advised: “Take advantage of the enemy’s unpreparedness, make your way by unexpected routes”.

Conclusively, in a world of competitiveness and struggles for the control of scarce resources, the currency of the people, businesses, products and ideas that are victorious is innovation. For Sun Tzu and, as well, all nation-states and institutions, winning requires careful preparations and the opportune launch of unexpected strategies and tactics. Nations surrounded by aggressors need not to neglect most, if not all Sun Tzu's principles. Little wonder why Israel is not out-rightly blamed for her Foreign Policies especially, her Machiavellian attitudes towards her Arab neighbours.

Academic Critiques of Sun Tzu's Military Strategy

Many Scholars of Chinese history have criticized the use of individual quotations from *The Art of War* as aphorisms, saying that doing so obscures the deeper significance and general coherence of the text. The truth is that many people have used or applied the principles in an unconventional way apt from the initial idea of Sun Tzu. Again, there has been long controversy concerning whether Sun Tzu was the sole author of the *Art of War* or whether it was a joint effort of some kinds, possibly, the work of a school, perhaps spanning many generations. Most chilly of all is that some thinkers contended that Sun Tzu was a mythical character who never existed as a human being.

In 1972, there was a great imagination; Scholars were rewarded with a major discovery when archeologists unearthing a tomb dating from the Han dynasty also turned up a copy of *The Art of War* on bamboo strips more than a thousand years older than any previously known copy. In his forward to Griffith's celebrated translation, the British military historian B.H. Liddell Hart highly praised "Sun Tzu's essay on 'The Art of War'. They might be termed the concentrated essence of wisdom on the conduct of war".

Some Scholars suggest that the text as we know today may be the result of the labours of several writers. Other critics have countered that the work could have been written only by someone who understood warfare thoroughly and practiced the outlined tenets, and that nevertheless, the text reads as if it is the work of a single author.

Scholar like Dennis and Clung Ping Bloodworth compared and contrasted Sun Tzu's philosophy with the philosophies of Niccolo Machiavelli, the Italian political theorist who wrote *The Prince*, and Carl Von Clausewitz, the Prussian army officer and military theorist, who, in his *On War*, proposed the doctrine of total war as an instrument of policy. Ronaldo Glasberg also compares and contrasts *The Art of War* to *The Prince*.

Griffith and the Bloodworths explained how Sun Tzu's guidelines for military strategy are still being used in modern China especially in her interactions with the U.S. government.

Sun Tzu is equally criticised to the effect that he wrote at the time of "Direct Command" i.e. a time when the scale of warfare was such that one talented Commander could effectively and in person, direct all the war efforts in the battlefield. No doubt, Warfare has gone beyond that point hundreds of years ago, and today, discouraging personal initiatives is a sure way to render any army useless.

Of great interest is also his idea that the enemy should be left with an exit. This is completely contrary to modern wars in which nations aim total destruction of the enemy than mere chasing away. Today, if you allow an army to retreat with ease, they would simply regroup and fight back. The U.S war on terrorism is a handy example because total destruction of the enemy is the target. On a serious note, *The Art of War* could have been the reason why the former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, established the "10-30-30" war fighting concept. Under this plan, the services would have 10 days to deploy a major force anywhere in the world, 30 days to fight and decisively win the war, and then 30 days to be ready to fight again (see <http://www.chifo.navy.mil/NAVPALIB..html>)

In every sincerity, if all the states are to apply the philosophies of *The Art of War*, the present world would automatically become unsafe. War and war alone cannot be taken to be the best strategy for the resolution of conflicts; diplomacy could be the best alternative. In all, it is also believed that *The Art of War* could be justified as an abstract philosophy rooted in the principles of Zen Buddhism and applicable to most conflicts and situations one can find him in.

Conclusion

Obviously, *The Art of War* is a master-piece that has been read by wide number of people from various backgrounds. It is also a great work that has, as well, influenced a great number of people to the extent that some of them can no longer take any decision without reference to the book. While controversies rage on about the origin of Sun Tzu, one is not surprised that another one is raging too on *The Art of War because*, in-between the two lays the truth: there is no Sun Tzu without *The Art of War*, just as there is no *The Art of War* without Sun Tzu. Of interest is the fact the Master (Sun Tzu) lived at a time war was regarded as a way of life and when an individual had the capacity to command and control great number of men. Such arrangement in contemporary reality is really incomprehensible However, the book remains

an inspiring strategic recipe for victory at war and personal experiences. It is also a great companion for men who think well because its lessons are not only military-inclined but are extended in good proportions to other spheres of life. That is why in all ramifications, it a book that will continue to be relevant in time and space. Thus, Sun Tzu lives on.

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