

The Wisdom of Sun Tzu's Art of War in China's Anti-Epidemic War

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Abstract: This article discusses China's approach to combating the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing parallels to Sun Tzu's Art of War. The Chinese government implemented various measures such as imposing penalties on those responsible for the epidemic, rewarding heroes, and improving medical staff treatment. China's strategy focused on immediate action and preventing prolonged warfare, reflecting Sun Tzu's principles. The government prioritized quick response, containment, and mobilization of resources to control the outbreak. China also shared its experience and achievements with the world, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation. The use of health codes and nucleic acid testing played a crucial role in identifying and managing the spread of the virus. Logistics and material support were prioritized to ensure the well-being of the population. The limitations and challenges faced in applying traditional war principles to a hidden enemy like the virus are also discussed. Overall, China's approach to the pandemic reflects a combination of strategic thinking, adaptability, and international collaboration.

Keywords: Sun Tzu's Art of War; China's Anti-Epidemic War; Epidemic; COVID-19; Political Science

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak was first on December 16, 2019, but it emerged earlier and has not yet caused a major outbreak^[1]. It wasn't until January 2020 that people identified the viral pneumonia of unknown cause as a novel coronavirus. The epidemic has not ended until December 2022. Many countries predict that the epidemic may stabilize in recent years, but it may be three years or more before the epidemic is over. Today, as China officially declares the end of the anti-epidemic war in 2020 and gradually relaxes its policies, the lives of the Chinese people are back on track.

The coronavirus is the common enemy of all mankind, and every country is waging a no-smoke war against it. The global response to the pandemic has lasted for more than a year, and countries have made different policy choices and levels of prevention and control in terms of epidemic control, vaccination, and economic recovery, resulting in huge differences in the performance of the response. The Tianmu Global Epidemic Response Ranking, a comprehensive score calculated by the screening epidemic index, vaccine index, and socioeconomic index, shows that China ranks first in the comprehensive anti-epidemic performance^[2]. China's strong capacity for epidemic prevention and control and economic recovery is enough to prove that it has won the war against the epidemic.

The successful case of China's fight against COVID-19 can be regarded as the proper application and continuation of Sun Tzu's principles in the Art of war. This article will analyze the hidden wisdom of Sun Tzu in China's war against COVID-19.

2. Start by learning from the failures

Since the outbreak of SARS in 2003, China has been building a nationwide medical prevention, China and control network and increasing investment in the medical and health sector^[3]. The purpose is to make arrangements in advance and make preparations before the outbreak so that the genetic sequence of the virus was determined and reported to the WHO within a few days of the outbreak. It is inseparable from the advanced layout of the past decade.

The coronavirus outbreak that hit Wuhan has cost the nation and its citizens a lot, and they have both suffered excruciatingly. According to the original circumstances, Wuhan initially failed to contain the new coronavirus in the minimum range^[4]. To put it plainly, China had a poor start. First of all, there was an illness that we were unfamiliar with and were unable to identify. Second, there are no viable treatments for it in contemporary medicine. Additionally, it appears that Wuhan's actual response slowed to a standstill, failing to impose a comprehen-

sive quarantine and shut off all routes of transmission, allowing the virus to spread throughout the nation. It was a hard lesson.

On January 23, however, Wuhan started to close its towns and villages, which was soon followed by numerous other locations in Hubei. Although a touch sluggish, the response was preferable to none at all. Cities and villages were placed under lockdown to stop the illness from spreading further. At the same time, sealing off cities and villages has started in several locations around the nation, which is also essential. In addition, the state swiftly dispatched a sizable medical staff from the People's Liberation Army Hospital and other healthcare facilities around the nation to assist Wuhan and Hubei and devoted themselves to patient care. Numerous assistance items, including medical protective gear and necessities, have been supported and donated around the nation^[5].

In doing so, they have effectively helped the people of Wuhan and Hubei, alleviated their terrible material shortages, and shown the nation as a whole how deeply friendly they are to the Hubeian people. They have also shown how united they are. Although the epidemic prevention and control in Wuhan was a lesson of failure, it became a source of experience and foreknowledge of China's future epidemic prevention.

3. China's counter-attack after its defeat

The Chinese government shut down cities in Hubei and Wuhan and used the mobile APP to track the virus^[6]. In addition, the Chinese government has formulated various strategies to fight the epidemic.

The Chinese government ordered its 1.4 billion people to stay home from confrontation with the "enemy," embodies "If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him." "Finally, the Chinese government cleverly brings the phrase "the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed to secure victory" into reality. With the rapid construction of Huoshenshan, Leishenshan hospital, Chinese provinces sent medical teams to concentrate their firepower and annihilate the enemy^[7]. In the early stage, Wuhan accumulated a lot of experience in fighting the epidemic. These experiences and practices are direct methods, which can withstand the attack of the virus. Vaccines and specific drugs are indirect methods because they are still under development. Once a vaccine and specific drugs are developed, the indirect method can be turned into a direct method, and the army will be able to fight the virus head-on. Vaccines and specific drugs are designed to find the virus's weakest points, inflicting devastating damage to end the fight quickly.

Recently, a new variant of the coronavirus, Omicron, has continued to spread at an accelerated pace in other countries around the world, but what is even more dangerous now is that knowledge of the Omicron variant is only superficial^[8]. Sun Tzu's Art of War says, "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles." The Chinese government has decided to be vigilant, insisting that scientific research on Omicron and its vulnerabilities needs to be accelerated to win the battle against the new variant of the coronavirus. Only through scientific research and rapid occupation of the high ground in the fight against the virus can obtain the final victory.

4. China's special applications and measures

4.1 Health code & The division of different levels of risk areas

Through the color of the health code, users can quickly identify whether they have passed through provinces and cities where the epidemic is relatively severe and whether they have directly or indirectly come into contact with infected patients. Then, through big data analysis, people who are likely to be infected can be directly targeted and identified.

Scanning the health code can record the specific locations visited by the user and show whether they have recently traveled to medium-high-risk areas. Once the epidemic changes, health codes that have recently traveled to medium-high-risk places may turn yellow and be banned. It can reduce the contact between the yellow and green codes to prevent the further spread of the epidemic.

In addition, using health codes can improve the efficiency of joint prevention and control of COVID-19. Scanning codes to report health information can help relevant government functional departments to conduct real-time monitoring and management and improve statistical efficiency.

4.2 Nucleic acid testing (NAT)

Nucleic acid testing is a method used to detect the presence of the novel coronavirus in the body. First, a nucleic acid test can confirm the disease. A positive result from a nucleic acid test will confirm that a patient has COVID-19. In this case, the corresponding treatment can be carried out according to the novel coronavirus pneumonia, so as not to delay the disease. Secondly, nucleic acid testing can detect patients in time, which can effectively manage patients and prevent social transmission. If a person infected with COVID-19 is detected through nucleic acid testing and the patient is quarantined immediately, social transmission can be effectively prevented.

5. How does China maintain morale and keep its soldiers strong

“Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy .” China’s war against the pandemic is also about logistics. Sun Tzu believed that some of the enemy’s equipment could also be taken from the enemy, which is to integrate captured enemy equipment and personnel into the own army as a way to supplement the war wastage. In the prevention and control of the epidemic, in addition to the coordinated allocation of resources across the province to strengthen the supply of masks and gowns to the affected areas, local governments have also fully explored local manufacturers of medical supplies ^[9]. China has provided necessary material support to the people in the sealed and controlled areas to dispel their doubts and ensure a smooth and orderly social meeting, thus achieving the goal of “Thus the army will have food enough for its needs .”

It is also the decision of the Chinese government to resume production at different times and reduce risk levels in different regions. Paying close attention to serious areas is in line with Sun Tzu’s “When it was to their advantage, they made a forward move; when otherwise, they stopped still ”. Act as soon as it is in the national interest because all decisions are based on what is in the national interest. After the epidemic has been contained, an orderly and timely resumption of production has become a major mission. How to resume production while preventing and controlling the epidemic is the focus of China’s work.

The Chinese government has also imposed heavy penalties on those responsible for the epidemic, rewarded the heroes of the fight against the epidemic, and improved the treatment of the medical staff fighting against the epidemic^[10]. In addition, small, medium, and micro enterprises affected by the epidemic have enjoyed tax reductions and rental fees, and generous financial policies, which reflects Sun Tzu’s idea of awarding or punishing according to special circumstances.

6. China’s strategy of taking immediate action

War is attrition, a desperate struggle between us and our enemies. The longer the war goes on, the worse it will be for the country and the army. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, it has spread across the world. China dare not slacken its efforts, and the situation abroad is even worse. This war without smoke has become a protracted war of attrition. The world’s continued downturn in the economic situation is evidence, reflecting Sun Tzu’s cloud “There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare “.

In the face of the sudden outbreak of the coronavirus, the Chinese government has always maintained the speed advantage, taking prompt actions and mobilizing ethnic cooperation to effectively achieve gradual containment. The prolonged anti-epidemic campaign caused by delaying the opportunity will cause great disadvantages, which reflects the ideological strategy of “In war, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns “ in Sun Tzu’s Art of War. In the early stage, the Chinese government focused on quickly dealing with the outbreak and controlling citizens’ travel to break the chain of transmission^[11]. Because the coronavirus is hidden deep, it is easy not to show. So a protracted war is not the way to fight the virus. State-owned hospitals and medical professionals from the People’s Liberation Army have been mobilized to the worst-hit areas and the origin of the epidemic to stop the source^[12]. This is also the idea that “In war, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns “, reflecting the arrival of any disaster should be quickly responded to.

7. China’s influence in the world

It is worth mentioning that while fighting the epidemic on its own, China, with an open mind and structure, has shared its experience and achievements in the fight against the epidemic with the rest of the world and reported its determination and achievements to the world. “Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk at the enemy’s plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy’s forces .” The

Chinese government is committed to winning the battle against the epidemic both intellectually and diplomatically. Introducing experience to the world and uniting global forces to win the battle against COVID-19 have won the praise and support of government leaders and people of all countries ^[13].

Omicron strains are significantly less pathogenic than they were three years ago. Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said at a recent press conference that we know more about the virus and antiviral drugs, as well as our experience in treating COVID-19 with traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine. It embodies Sun Tzu's idea in *The Art of War* that "On the ground of intersecting highways, join hands with your allies", which means that China consolidates its exchanges with other countries in an internationalized world and closes diplomatic relations with each other to maximize international assistance and related knowledge.

8. Limitations

Because the virus was an invisible, inhuman enemy in this war, many of Sun Tzu's principles of war could not be applied. For example, "victorious strategist seeks battle only after the victory has been won. "do not attack soldiers whose temper is Keen And avoid an army when its spirit is Keen If he is in superior strength, evade him. " These principles do not apply to dealing with an enemy whose and simply cannot be seen. At the same time, we have no idea what actions will the invisible enemy take.

Secondly, the epidemic hit Shanghai very quickly and violently in March 2022, causing the number of new confirmed cases in a single day to exceed 10,000, which also led to Shanghai entering an emergency comprehensive lockdown^[14]. At the same time, countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and South Korea announced full opening-up and decided not to interfere with citizens' contact with the virus, allowing citizens to defeat the virus through their immune systems. In this comparison, many Chinese people, especially those in Shanghai, question the accuracy and rationality of the Chinese government's decision-making. The sudden attack by this invisible enemy severely affected Shanghai's economy, which Sun Tzu's *Art of War* was powerless to handle^[15].

In addition, the enemy is growing its army and cultivating new strains of the virus. As a result, China's measures at this stage are likely to be inappropriate for future situations.

9. Conclusion

The Chinese government has skillfully applied many of the principles of Sun Tzu's *Art of war* to combat the epidemic. The success of China and the wisdom of Sun Tzu's *art of war* deserve to be learned by the whole world. It is believed that in the fight against the epidemic, China will demonstrate more of Sun Tzu's wisdom in the *Art of war* and create more miracles that attract the attention of the world.

Although people are tired of Nucleic Acid Test, lockdown policy, and showing health code, China's policies do protect Chinese people from the virus and give almost everyone the time and opportunity to be vaccinated. In addition, as research on the virus continues to be deepened, China is also making an otherwise deadly virus less harmful to people, laying a solid foundation for the present open policy. Therefore, the relaxation of China's current policy is due to the strict control of the previous Chinese government, which the Chinese people need to be grateful for and remember.

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