

# A brief historic literature review of the world health organization and five of its members on their COVID pandemic responses in light of commentary by Sun Tzu's art of war

Alvin Tan Lik Hooi<sup>1,2</sup>, Osman b Ali<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PKD Kinta, <sup>2</sup>UniKL RCMP

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Public health issues, in particular infectious diseases, are national security issues. In fact, there are many similarities between infectious disease outbreaks and organised warfare between nation – states. According to this mechanistic reasoning, outbreaks and warfare should be generally comparable, albeit with adjustments. Using the recent CoViD – 19 pandemics as an example, some political leaders did embrace the idea of warfare against the pandemic. The Art of War by Sun Tzu is the “prototype” of the military mindset, has been confirmed to be the earliest military treatise in history, and is relevant even today in diverse fields. Thus it should be the yardstick to measure militarised responses to outbreaks as well. **Materials and Method:** For six polities (the World Health Organization, China, USA, Malaysia, Sweden and Israel) a literature review of significant points of each polity's response during the CoViD pandemic (total 24 documents) was conducted with the relevant points of each polity's CoViD response narrative compared with relevant excerpts of the Art of War. **Results:** Apart from Israel, the polities' measures as described in the literature and in light of the Art of War were found to be delayed, inadequate and ineffectual, which led to the pandemic being drawn out both worldwide and in those nations. This was in direct contradiction to the principles in the Art of War. Military resources and military mindsets were either not used, or not used in full, being subordinated to civilian concerns. **Conclusion:** Deployment of military resources and methods against the CoViD pandemic described in the literature generally did not fulfil the principles of the Art of War. Several key points where the disease could be checked were not taken advantage of, with resultant prolongation of the pandemic and unnecessary increase in morbidity and mortality.