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# Chaos as an Ally

## by Fabio Gomes



### **W**hen the Unpredictable Becomes an Asset

In Western culture, chaos is often portrayed as something negative, dangerous, and unwanted. In the field of security, for instance, it is commonly linked to operational failures, civil unrest, critical disruptions, and loss of control. Yet, through the lens of classical Chinese strategic thought, chaos can be seen in an entirely different light.

For this millennia-old tradition, chaos is not necessarily a breakdown. It can signal a transition, a turning point, a call to realign. When recognized with clarity, chaos stops being an obstacle and becomes a strategic ally.

#### **Challenging Circumstances Do Not Always Mean Poor Decisions**

Picture a shopping center security team faced with a sudden power outage that plunges the entire facility into darkness for several minutes. Anxiety ripples through the crowd, rumors of looting spread, the internet goes down, and radios fall silent. While many may lose composure, those who understand chaos as part of the natural flow of reality tend to remain calm. Instead of resisting what is already unfolding, they adapt swiftly, position themselves strategically, and act with focused presence.

Traditional Chinese wisdom teaches that there is no inherently good or bad situation. There is only the situation itself. Whether it is labeled as positive or negative depends on interpretation. Those who prepare with this mindset know that the goal is not to control chaos, but to understand it and operate effectively within it.

#### **Plan with Purpose, Not with Rigidity**

This perspective does not reject planning. Quite the opposite - planning is vital. But plans should serve as guiding references, not as unyielding scripts. Overly rigid plans can collapse under the weight of even minor deviations. For this reason, Chinese strategic thinking prizes variation and adaptability. The aim is not to execute a plan to the letter but to uphold the principles that give it meaning, even when the environment

changes unexpectedly.

Imagine a security supervisor who trains the team to evacuate through a specific route.

When a fire breaks out, that route is blocked. Blindly following the plan would put everyone at risk. With principles firmly in place, the team can act freely and decisively, finding another exit while preserving the mission's intent.

#### **Adversity as a Mirror**

Chinese wisdom invites us to view chaos as a mirror. It does not create problems; it reveals how prepared we are for the unexpected. Adversity exposes the true level of presence and discernment in a security professional. The finest uniform, the most advanced equipment, and the most detailed protocols mean little without the ability to adapt consciously.

Consider a guard handling an incident involving someone in the midst of a psychological crisis. The protocol alone will not suffice. They must read the context, feel the rhythm of the situation, adjust their energy, and act with firmness or softness as the moment demands. This is guided not by mechanical instruction, but by lived wisdom.

#### **Flow With Reality, Do Not Fight It**

A principle from classical Chinese strategy states that water overcomes rock not by force but by flexibility and persistence - persistence not as stubbornness, but as the ability to move forward without seizing or overpowering. Similarly, an effective security professional does not resist reality. They read its signs, adapt to its shifts, and respond proportionally while staying true to the mission's core principles.

Seen in this way, chaos is no longer an enemy. It becomes an opportunity, a call to intelligence, and an invitation to act with clarity. Properly understood, chaos does not destroy; it refines.

And perhaps that is why, in traditional Chinese wisdom, the goal is not to eliminate the unexpected, but to remain ready to face it with dignity, focus, and purpose.

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### **About the Author**

*Fabio Gomes is a professional with extensive experience in training special operations forces using the Chinese martial system of Ving Tsun. With a solid background in security consulting and years of collaboration with the Brazilian Army's Special Forces and Commandos, he has also conducted training with the Special Police Operations Battalion (BOPE) in Rio de Janeiro, contributing to the enhancement of elite police officers. His approach integrates strategic intelligence and human development, offering comprehensive training that goes beyond physical combat, promoting an adaptive and proactive mindset.*

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