

Joint Doctrine Note 1-18



Strategy



25 April 2018



Unclassified

PREFACE

1. Scope

This joint doctrine note (JDN) provides guidance to develop, implement strategy, and assess strategy. It focuses on the development of national-level military strategy and how the military instrument of power is used, in combination with the other instruments of national power, in pursuit of policy objectives. It discusses the essential elements of any strategy; the relationship of ends, ways, and means; and the interaction among strategic objectives, national strategy, and military strategy. It also examines strategies that may be developed in different situations. Finally, it looks at how strategy is made, who makes it, what moral criteria guide strategic decisions, and what pitfalls may occur in the making of strategy.

2. Purpose

This JDN provides the baseline structure for understanding the fundamental principles of strategy and provides understanding and perspective on its development, execution, and assessment that strategists, planners, trainers, commanders, and staffs can use. It provides a short-term bridging solution for joint doctrine. The JDN supplements current joint doctrine and provides context for those who develop national strategy and implement it at subordinate levels. In addition to using current joint and Service doctrine, extant procedures, and existing policy guidance, this document uses the extensive literature on strategy found in academia, professional military education institutions, and the private sector.

3. Application

The guidance in this JDN is not authoritative. If conflicts arise between the contents of this JDN and the contents of a joint publication (JP), the JP will take precedence for the activities of joint forces unless the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issues guidance that is more current. This JDN may supplement strategy discussions in JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*; JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*; and JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*.



KEVIN D. SCOTT
Vice Admiral, USN
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Presents an Introduction and Overview of Strategic Theory**
- **Describes a Strategy Formulation Framework and Methodology**
- **Discusses a Fundamental Strategic Approach in Today's Complex Security Environment**
- **Explains the Value and Benefits of Continued Assessments**
- **Explains How to Determine Costs and Risks in Assessing Strategy**
- **Discusses How to Evaluate Strategy**

Theory

Overview

Strategy is about how nations use the power available to them to exercise control over people, places, things, and events to achieve objectives in accordance with their national interests and policies. The challenge for the strategist is to coordinate the various levers of national power in a coherent or smart way.

Joint doctrine advises, “Strategy is a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater or multinational objectives.”

Ends—Ways—Means—Risk Methodology

All strategies entail the same fundamental logic of ends, ways, and means. A comprehensive and effective strategy answers three basic questions:

- Where do we want to go, or what are the desired **ends**?
- How do we get there, or what are the **ways**?
- What resources are available, or what are the **means**?
- What are the **risks and costs** associated with the strategy?

Policy, Strategy, and National Power

National strategy orchestrates the instruments of national power in support of policy objectives and outlines a broad course of action or guidance statements adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives.

The Nature and Character of Warfare

The strategist must recognize the nature of warfare and understand its implications for how to prosecute the war.

The character of warfare at any point in time and in any area reflects the nature of the societies waging it.

Grand Strategy

Grand strategy aims to secure and advance a nation's long-term, enduring, core interests over time.

At the grand strategic level, the ways and means to achieve US core national interests are based on the national leadership's strategic vision of America's role in the world.

National Security Strategy

The national security strategy outlines the nation's major national security concerns and how the nation plans to deal with them.

National Military Strategy

The national military strategy provides the joint force with a framework to protect and advance US national interests. It reflects the collective wisdom of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the combatant commanders, and represents their best military advice.

Combatant Command Strategy

Combatant command strategies bridge national strategic guidance and joint operational planning as it guides the development of the Combatant Command Campaign Plan.

Combatant commands develop campaign plans that outline their vision for integrating and synchronizing military activities and operations with the other instruments of national power to attain national strategic ends.

Strategic Ends and Means

Introduction

Unraveling the complexity and resolving the uncertainty calls for the ability to think strategically about the problem at hand.

Thinking strategically reconciles the **ends** with the **means** and **ways**.

The key to developing a strategy lies in devising an ends-ways-means-risks/costs relationship that helps the strategic situation and attains the desired end state.

Defining the Desired Ends

A nation's interests are those fundamental, enduring conditions a state chooses to pursue.

The security environment's complexity forces strategists and policy makers to make hard choices.

One approach is to categorize national interests as **vital, important, and peripheral**.

- **Vital interests:** What are we willing to die for? States generally have four vital interests: security of the home territory, safety of citizens at home and abroad, economic prosperity, and preservation of the national way of life.
- **Important interests:** What are we willing to fight for? Nations important interests generally include freedom of access to the global commons, regional stability, secure alliances, or the promotion of the state's values.
- **Peripheral interests:** What are we willing to fund (deploy peacekeepers, balance trade deficits)?

The Instruments of National Power

The 'DIME' acronym (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) has been used for many years to describe the instruments of national power. Despite how long the DIME has been used for describing the instruments of national power, US policy makers and strategists have long understood that there are many more instruments involved in

national security policy development and implementation.

New acronyms such as MIDFIELD (military, informational, diplomatic, financial, intelligence, economic, law, and development) convey a much broader array of options for the strategic and policymaker to use.

Orchestrating the Instruments of National Power

Each instruments of national power works most effectively when it is supported by and operates harmoniously with, the other instruments of national power.

These elements align to the major executive branches applying the power: the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce, as well as the intelligence community.

Strategic Ways

Strategic Competition

The US is facing several complex challenges requiring innovative responses and is already facing rivals that it cannot optimally engage.

These rival actors are evading US strength by competing at a level below the threshold of a coercive US or allied military response.

They interact in the international arena across a comprehensive strategic competition continuum that ranges from **peaceful cooperation**, through **competition below armed conflict**, to **armed conflict**.

- **Cooperation** includes mutually beneficial relationships between strategic actors with similar or compatible interests. Although interests will rarely be in complete alignment, cooperative relations underpin the international order, enhance collective security, and deter conflict.
- **Competition below armed conflict** exists when two or more strategic actors view one another as competitors (as opposed to

adversaries) that have incompatible interests. Competitors may cooperate with one another or engage in behavior detrimental to other strategic actor's interests.

- **Armed conflict** involves the use of violence as the primary means by which a strategic actor seeks to satisfy its interests or react to provocation.

Relationship Between Strategic Ends and Military Ways

Planning for conflict termination is just as important as designing a successful military campaign.

The whole point of warfare is to seek a better or more permanent political condition through conflict termination. How a nation ends its war with a foe can determine future relations.

Assessing Strategy

Introduction

Assessing costs and risks must permeate the process of developing strategy.

Strategies at any level normally lack resources or the ability to employ resources in a manner sufficient for complete assurance of success.

Continual Assessment

Continuous assessment should be a formalized, recurring process during the life of the strategy that assesses and evaluates the strategy's ends, ways, means, and risks against the evolving realities and possibilities in the strategic environment.

National interests and policy often change over time. As a result, new strategies or modification(s) to extant strategies may be appropriate.

Costs and Risks

Costs represent the outlay of resources and other assets needed to attain strategic ends.

Risks are elements that could go wrong in a strategy.

There is no magic formula for calculating risk. Risks emerge as the strategist brings insightful, objective analysis and judgment to bear on what research and intelligence has revealed about the nature and dynamics of the problem.

Assessing Validity

Strategists must continuously apply these basic validity tests of validity throughout the strategy development process.

Evaluating Strategy

The preeminent metric for judging a strategy's success is whether it achieves the desired political aim at an acceptable cost.

CHAPTER I

THEORY

“Without a strategy, facing up to any problem or striving for any objective would be considered negligent.”

Sir Lawrence Freedman
Strategy: A History

1. Introduction

Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, tells us: “War is socially sanctioned violence to achieve a strategic purpose.” What matters ultimately is achieving political and strategic objectives that protect or advance national interests and preferably attained within the less-costly portions of the strategic competition environment (described in Chapter III).

2. Overview

a. Strategy is about how nations use the power available to them to exercise control over people, places, things, and events to achieve objectives in accordance with their national interests and policies. The challenge for the strategist is to coordinate the various levers of national power in a coherent or smart way. Joint doctrine advises, “Strategy is a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater or multinational objectives” (JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*). Coherent and effective strategy is essential to achieving a specific objective or sets of objectives. Strategy makes action purposeful; without it, action tends to be ad hoc, incoherent, and potentially counterproductive.

b. Strategy is both practical and purposeful. It entails a coherent design for using appropriate instruments of national power to produce a specific outcome. All strategies entail the same fundamental logic of ends, ways, and means that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Each strategy’s context, applicability, capability, and purpose determines the specific factors that are considered in its development. A comprehensive and effective strategy answers three basic questions:

- (1) Where do we want to go, or what are the desired ends?
- (2) How do we get there, or what are the ways?
- (3) What resources are available, or what are the means?
- (4) What are the risks and costs associated with the strategy?

c. Strategy is also scalable. In the national security arena, it occurs or applies:

(1) At multiple levels from international (e.g., United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union, African Union, Association of Southeast Asia Nations, et al) to local and regional non-state actors;

(2) With respect to different instruments of national power (e.g., traditionally aligned in the ‘DIME’ model of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic); but also includes financial, intelligence, rule of law, and development.

(3) For a variety of objectives, from shaping the global security arena to dealing with a specific security challenges.

d. Practitioners. The highest political and military officials (the President, Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and combatant commanders) develop and implement strategy. In addition to strategic leaders, US military strategists includes theorists and planners who are not only officers and civilians within the Pentagon, but also members of the staffs of the Services, combatant commands, subordinate unified commands, joint task forces, and combat support agencies.

3. Policy, Strategy, and National Power

a. National policy articulates national objectives. National policy is a broad course of action or guidance statements adopted by national governments in pursuit of national objectives. While policy is different from politics, it is produced via a political process, and is usually the result of compromises among the political leadership. National strategy orchestrates the instruments of national power in support of policy objectives.

b. Politics concerns power. Power can be material in nature, e.g., possession of money, or resources, or weapons and armed personnel. Power also can be psychological in nature: legal, religious, or scientific authority; intellectual or social prestige; a charismatic personality able to excite or persuade; or a reputation for diplomatic or military skill. Politics deals with how power is distributed and used in a society. The process of distributing power may be peaceful and orderly, or it may be violent and chaotic.

c. Politics is inherently dynamic, both because the process for distributing power is under constant pressure for change and because it is interactive—a simultaneously cooperative and competitive process. Political events and their outcomes are the product of reinforcing, conflicting, contradictory, sometimes compromising, and often adversarial forces. This complex political process is neither a linear nor a wholly predictable process. Actual outcomes often differ from what the participants intended. The addition of violence into the political process frequently serves to amplify problems controlling, or even predicting, its ultimate course.

d. Thinking usefully about making and carrying out strategy requires an understanding of the fundamental nature of politics and the violent expression of politics called warfare. An understanding of warfare must start with the assertion by the early nineteenth century Prussian general and military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, that warfare is the continuation of politics by other means. Clausewitz teaches that warfare is a social phenomenon and its logic driven by more than just scientific principles and engineering as

a uniquely human endeavor, it is the logic of social transactions. In warfare, the critical social transaction is political interaction, adding organized violence to political interaction has powerful and unique effects.

e. Thus, warfare is a product of both politics and policy, which has two implications for strategists. First, to be viable, strategy must aim to achieve the policy goals set by the political leadership. Second, the strategist must recognize and accept that those policy goals are created within the chaotic and emotional realm of politics. The military professional who believes politics has no place in strategy does not understand the fundamentals of strategy. Strategists necessarily operate within the constraints of politics and policy.

4. The Political Action Spectrum

States, non-states, and other actors continually interact with other parties in the international arena; this interaction can be cooperative or antagonistic. Eventually they find themselves in competition/conflict with other parties in the international arena. This occurs when interests are incompatible and they contest with one another as each seeks to protect or advance its own interests. This competition can take many forms ranging from diplomatic, economic, or informational interactions that are within the norms of peaceful international interactions. It can also take the form of large-scale international armed conflict. In between are a variety of aggressive and hostile actions that states and non-state actors can mix and match in an effort to create leverage and gain advantage. These levels of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict can include a variety of military actions short of the use of force. The use of military force, however, is a point beyond which the involved parties are engaged in warfare that has a nature and character all its own.

5. The Nature and Character of Warfare

Warfare is, most fundamentally, the use of force to make an enemy to do one's will. When a party finds itself unable to achieve its goals short of the use of force, it may turn to violence to make its enemy change behavior.

a. **Warfare's Constant Nature.** The fact that warfare entails the use of force to attain its ends gives it fundamental, constant qualities that define it as a distinct social phenomenon. Violence against other human beings arouses a level of emotion—passion—in both combatants and bystanders that is orders of magnitude greater than that aroused by any other social interaction. If warfare is to support interests, the political leadership must work to overcome domestic political discord to establish a clear objective and ensure that objective controls the scope, intensity, and shape of military operations. Clausewitz, summarized the fundamental nature of warfare neatly in his description of warfare as a “remarkable trinity, composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity.” Clausewitz saw the nature of warfare as defined by the interplay of passion, chance and creativity, and reason. At any given moment in a war, one of these elements may dominate, but the other two are always at work. The strategist must recognize the nature of warfare and understand its implications for how to prosecute the war.

b. **Warfare’s Variable Character.** A critical job of the strategist is to determine the character of the warfare that might occur. While warfare’s fundamental nature remains constant, its character—what war looks like at any point in time and space—reflects the nature of the societies waging it (see Figure I-1). It reflects political, economic, social, cultural, and technological dynamics at work in the societies at war at that time. It manifests itself in who fights, why they fight and how they fight. As Clausewitz warns, “The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish ... the kind of war on which they are embarking.” That judgment should inform the political decision to fight or to take action that could lead to warfare.

6. Levels of Strategy

a. **Grand Strategy.** Grand strategy exists at a level above those strategies intended to secure particular ends, and above the use of military power alone to achieve strategic objectives. Grand strategy aims to secure and advance a nation’s long-term, enduring, core interests over time. A nation’s grand strategy also shows great persistence over time, orienting on those interests deemed most important; interests for which virtually any nation will spend, legislate, threaten, or fight to defend or advance. At the grand strategic level, the ways and means to attain US core national interests are based on the national leadership’s strategic vision of America’s role in the world. Enduring values and beliefs embodied in the national interests represent the legal, philosophical, and moral basis for continuation of the nation’s system.

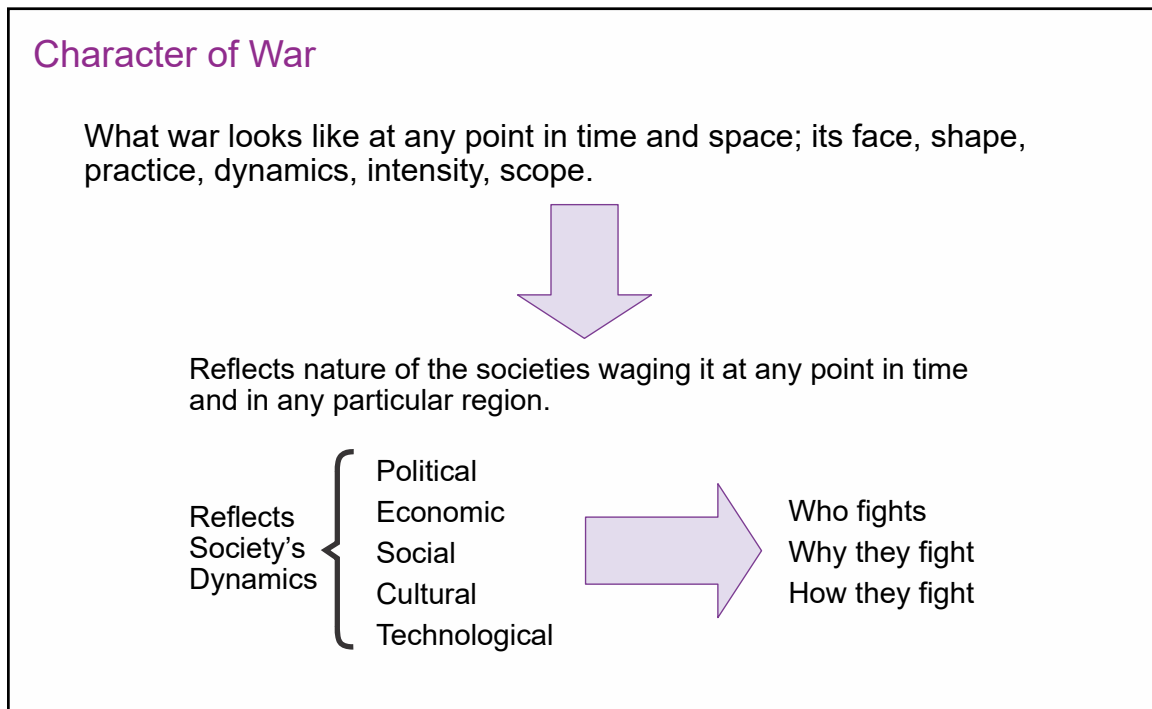


Figure I-1. Character of War

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Required by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, the strategy describes: the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives...the foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the US necessary to deter aggression ... the short-term and long term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of national power to protect or promote the interests ... the adequacy of the capabilities of the US to carry out the national security strategy. Since the statutory requirement, there have been 11 national security strategies released by US Presidents (two from Ronald Reagan, two from George H.W. Bush, three from Bill Clinton, two from George W. Bush, and two from Barack Obama).

**From National to Theater, Developing Strategy Joint Forces Quarterly,
3rd Qtr 2013**

b. **National Security Strategy (NSS).** The Executive Branch of the US Government publishes the NSS. The NSS outlines the nation's major national security concerns and how the nation plans to deal with them.

(1) National security strategists rely on selected institutions and actors to secure the national policy objectives; they pursue objectives by employing the instruments of national power. Each instrument of national power comprises a set of broad capabilities available to the strategist. For example, the military instrument revolves around employing capabilities such as security cooperation; force enabling (that lends credibility to the threat of force); and/or the actual use of force (should the capabilities, influence or threats not achieve the desired objectives).

(2) Policy makers' articulate their perceptions of national interests in policy objectives that may be too broad to serve as concrete goals for a strategy; however, these policy objectives are used in the formulation of the strategy's objectives. Strategic objectives define the outcome the strategist believes will preserve, protect, and/or advance the national interests at stake. Identifying the national interests in a particular strategic challenge clarifies why dealing with it is important, as the purpose of the strategy is to reshape these challenges into a state of affairs that is either less troubling and/or more promising. The national strategy may also describe the distinct achievements required to produce the strategic objectives; these are the strategy's supporting objectives. Strategy coherence results from a tight linkage between the national interests at stake, the policy objectives pursued to secure the national interests, and the strategic ends, reinforced by supporting objectives that will inevitably attain the strategy's desired end state.

(3) Conceptually, strategists must distinguish institutions that wield the instruments of national power from the instruments themselves. Military institutions are those organizations principally organized, trained, and equipped to wield the military instrument of power, but they do not solely comprise the military instrument itself. For example, the Department of Defense (DOD) is the institution most likely to wield the military instrument of

NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY IN LAW

The Chairman shall determine each even-numbered year whether to prepare a new National Military Strategy (NMS) in accordance with this paragraph or to update a strategy previously prepared in accordance with this paragraph. The Chairman shall provide such NMS or update to the Secretary of Defense in time for transmittal to Congress pursuant to paragraph (3), including in time for inclusion in the report of the Secretary of Defense ...

Each NMS (or update) under this paragraph shall be based on a comprehensive review conducted by the Chairman in conjunction with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands. Each update shall address only those parts of the most recent NMS for which the Chairman determines, on the basis of the review, that a modification is needed ...

Each NMS (or update) submitted under this paragraph shall describe how the military will support the objectives of the United States as articulated in:

- The most recent National Security Strategy prescribed by the President...;
- Pursuant to section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 ...;
- The most recent annual report of the Secretary of Defense submitted to the President and Congress ...;
- The most recent national defense strategy presented by the Secretary of Defense ...;
- The most recent policy guidance provided by the Secretary of Defense ...;
- Any other national security or defense strategic guidance issued by the President or the Secretary of Defense.

At a minimum, each NMS (or update) submitted under this paragraph shall:

- Assess the strategic environment, threats, opportunities, and challenges that affect the national security of the United States ...;
- Assess military ends, ways, and means to support the objectives ...;
- Provide the framework for the assessment by the Chairman of military strategic and operational risks, and for the development of risk mitigation options ...;
- Develop military options to address threats and opportunities ...;
- Assess joint force capabilities, capacities, and resources ...;

- **Establish military guidance for the development of the joint force and the total force building on guidance by the President and the Secretary of Defense**

Title 10, United States Code, 153, Chairman: Functions

power, but when the Central Intelligence Agency eliminates a terrorist using a remotely piloted aircraft, it is exercising lethal force usually attributed to the military instrument of power.

c. **National Military Strategy (NMS).** The NMS provides the joint force with a framework to protect and advance US national interests. It is strategic direction for the military contribution to pursue the objectives of the NSS to advance national interests. The principal focus of this joint doctrine note is military strategy, the art and science of employing force and the threat of force to secure the objectives of national policy.

(1) The NMS provides an overarching military strategic framework that will better inform resource planning and allocation priorities, risk distribution, and Joint Force development. It recognizes the challenges posed by an evolving security environment and seeks to address them through a comprehensive and globally integrated approach to planning, operations, and capability development that retains a competitive advantage over potential adversaries.

(2) Military strategy should relate to the state's overall NSS. Military strategy supports, and should be compatible and complementary with the NSS.

(3) Military strategy applies the military instrument of national power towards attaining the overall NSS end states. The fundamental challenge for the military strategist is three-fold: first, define the objectives that will help attain the national end state(s); second, develop a plan to achieve the objectives; and third, ensure compatibility with the other instruments of national power. The next chapters will explore various aspects of developing military strategy in more detail.

(4) Military strategy must relate to the US' overall NSS that orchestrates the instruments of national power to secure political objectives.

d. Combatant Command Strategy

(1) Using national strategy as a guide, combatant commanders develop campaign plans that outline their vision for integrating and synchronizing military activities and operations with the other instruments of national power to attain strategic ends.

(2) Combatant command strategies bridge national strategic guidance and joint operational planning as it guides the development of the Combatant Command Campaign Plan (CCP). Their strategies and the CCPs that operationalizes them offer an integrated approach to achieving security objectives. More broadly, theater strategies should seek to make conflicts less likely by achieving US ends through activities (such as security

cooperation) as well as other tools of national power. The CCP flows from the commander's theater strategy and provides the action plan to implement the strategy. The current construct for nesting plans for a theater is first to build a campaign plan that implements the activities required to achieve the desired outcomes for the theater from a comprehensive, proactive, and integrated strategy then deal with deviations from the strategy as branches requiring contingency plans.

CHAPTER II STRATEGIC ENDS AND MEANS

“The most fundamental task in devising a grand strategy is to determine a nation’s national interests. Once they are identified, they drive a nation’s foreign policy and military strategy; they determine the basic direction that it takes, the types and amounts of resources that it needs, and the manner in which the state must employ them to succeed. Because of the critical role that national interests play, they must be carefully justified, not merely assumed.”

Robert J. Art, A Grand Strategy for America

1. Introduction

Strategy is about how nations uses the instruments of national power to exercise control over people, places, things, and events to achieve strategic objectives in accordance with national interests and policies.

a. Complexity and uncertainty are inherent in any strategic challenge. Unraveling the complexity and resolving the uncertainty is difficult and calls for the ability to think strategically about the problem at hand. Thinking strategically reconciles the ends with the means and circumstances. The following fundamental elements should be considered when developing strategy:

(1) Analyzing the strategic **situation** (the challenge, the security environment and its international and domestic components).

(2) Defining the desired **ends** (the outcomes sought or end states), to include first defining the overarching national or strategic objectives, and then the subordinate objectives.

(3) Developing the **means** (resources and capabilities) to bring to bear.

(4) Designing the **ways** to use the means to attain the desired ends (see Chapter III, “Strategic Ways”).

(5) Assessing the **risks** and **costs** associated with the strategy (see Chapter IV, “Assessing Strategy”).

b. Strategy formulation demands creativity, critical thinking, insight, and judgment, as well as the courage to act on that judgment. Determining the strategic security environment illustrated below requires the strategist to answer innumerable questions to produce an effective strategy. Unfortunately, the strategist may find definitive answers to only some of those questions; for the rest, the strategist must rely on assumptions. In developing strategies, unknown factors often outnumber known factors. Thus, the strategist always operates in an atmosphere of widespread volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. The key for the strategist is to thoroughly understand the

national decision maker’s “red lines” for unacceptable outcomes and then design strategies that will steer future outcomes into a range of acceptable end states.

c. Figure II-1 illustrates one way to visualize the interrelationships of the strategic security environment in any situation. It depicts the strategic situation as a cloud; it is shapeless, ever shifting, and considerably opaque. Comprising that cloud are considerations such as the problem’s parameters, international and domestic conditions that bear on the problem, national interests and political objectives, threats to those interests (or opportunities for advancing them), and constraints on freedom of action. Identifying national interests is crucial for the development of strategy, national interests are essential to establishing the objectives or ends that serve as the goals for policy and strategy.

d. The key to developing a strategy lies in devising an ends-ways-means-risks/costs relationship that helps the strategic situation and attains the desired end state. Strategists should begin with national interests as a starting point to determine ends. The strategist cannot formulate the ends without considering available means, possible ways, and likely risks and costs. When the calculus does not support the desired end state due to an unacceptable level of risk, cost, or a lack of means, or will then the ends must be adjusted: either changed, limited, or delayed until more favorable conditions exist. The cyclical

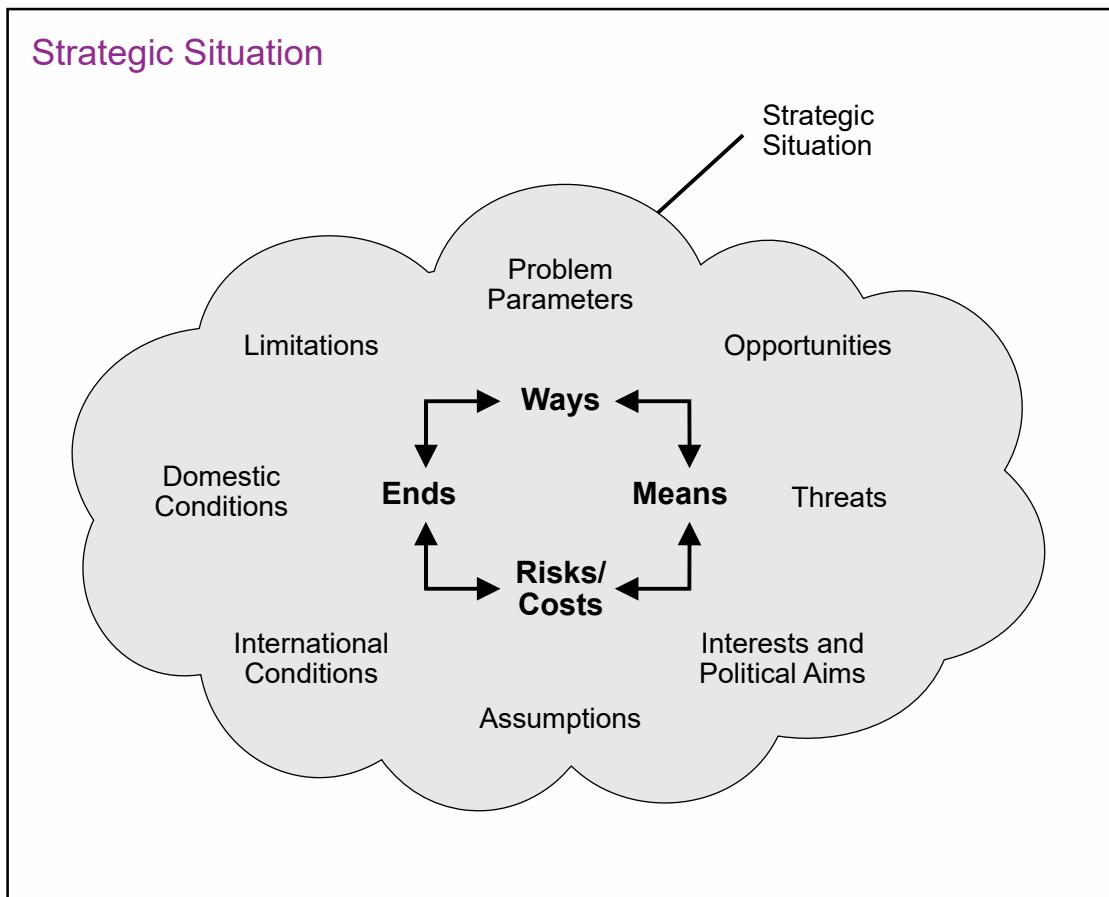


Figure II-1. Strategic Situation

relationship in Figure II-1 demonstrates that there is no end to the process, the strategist should continually reassess the strategy across its execution.

2. Analyzing the Strategic Situation

a. Every security challenge occurs within a broader strategic situation. To provide definitive focus for strategy development, a clear, concise summary problem statement is essential. The strategist should identify the relevant factors (political, military, economic, social/cultural, historical, technological, informational, legal, etc.) essential to producing an accurate description of the security challenge at hand. Included in this elaboration is the strategist's best judgment about the interests, perceptions, and intentions of the other actors associated with the challenge.

b. Events across the strategic security environment powerfully shape both the challenge itself and possible approaches to dealing with it. The strategist should identify the most important regional and global conditions and dynamics that bear on the nature of the challenge and the range of potential strategic responses. National security threats have evolved and future conflicts will likely be dealt with across multiple borders, boundaries, domains and functions. Strategists must think their way to success in incredibly complex scenarios.

3. Defining the Desired Ends

a. The desired ends get to the "why" the strategy is being developed and seeks to answer the question: "How does the state's leadership want the adversary to behave?" Attaining the desired ends defines strategic success.

b. Defining strategic ends begins with determining a nation's interests; those fundamental, enduring conditions a state chooses to pursue. National leaders evaluate the interests to determine if a state has a stake in a particular security issue, determining both why the problem is important and how serious a challenge the problem presents. For the US, the executive branch of the federal government has primary responsibility for determining the national interests that address perceived needs and aspirations external to the geographic borders of the nation. Determining internal or domestic interests is complex with executive and legislative bodies at federal, state, and local levels interacting in the political process to reach.

c. Once the appropriate interests have been determined, the next question for the strategist is to answer why the nation should care enough to do anything about them. The security environment's complexity forces strategists and policy makers to make hard choices. One approach is to categorize national interests as vital, important, and peripheral.

(1) **Vital** interests: What are we willing to die for? States generally have four vital interests: security of the home territory, safety of citizens at home and abroad, economic prosperity, and preservation of the national way of life.

DEVELOPING AN ENDURING STRATEGY—COLD WAR EXAMPLE

In May 1953, shortly after Dwight Eisenhower succeeded Truman as president of the United States, Eisenhower authorized Project Solarium in which three teams would operate in secret at the National War College to propose various strategies for dealing with a Soviet Union that was projected to field an arsenal of thousands of thermonuclear weapons and missiles for delivering them. George Kennan headed Team-A of Project Solarium, and in July 1953, President Eisenhower attended a daylong conference at the White House to hear the various teams make their cases for their strategies. Eisenhower opted for Team-A's approach, which was largely a continuation of the Truman administration's containment policy.

By that autumn, as the National War College Class of 1954 was setting into its academic routine, Eisenhower's National Security Council would turn Team-A's proposal into NSC-162/2, which like NSC-68 strove to contain the Soviet Union, but unlike NSC-68, NSC-162/2 relied to a much greater degree on nuclear weapons and deterrence and less on an expensive conventional military force buildup.

Although later administrations would produce updated National Security Strategy documents, the fundamental concepts developed in Roosevelt Hall in the early years of the Cold War remained the basis for American foreign policy and strategy until the Cold War's end.

Strategic Leadership Foundation Course National War College,
Fall 2017

(2) **Important** interests: What are we willing to fight for? Nations important interests generally include freedom of access to the global commons, regional stability, secure alliances, or the promotion of the state's values.

(3) **Peripheral** interests: What are we willing to fund (deploy peacekeepers, balance trade deficits)?

d. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld proposed similar questions in 2002 by asking, "Is the proposed action truly necessary? If people could be killed, ours or others, the US must have a darn good reason." These questions act as a way to understand the intensity of national interests and defining ends. Not all foreign policy crises result in deploying ground forces, and we argue that the type of force deployed (air, ground, or allies) is a good empirical way to understand the intensity of national interests.

e. Should the political leadership decide it wants to use the military instrument of power to attain a desired strategic end, the challenge for the military strategist is to develop options that are coordinated with the other national instruments of power. Taking into account the strategic objective and the strategic situation, the strategist must identify what objective(s), once achieved, will attain the desired strategic end.

f. Military strategists face difficult challenges in formulating the objectives of a wartime military strategy. The strategist must gauge the types and level of effects that will attain the strategic end. Clearly, some wars will call for much wider application of force than others will.

(1) The use or threat of force works via death and destruction. However, death and destruction in and of themselves are seldom warfare's objective. States and non-state actors go to war to attain a particular political, social, economic, or ideological objective. This is of critical importance when the destruction of an enemy's military is either unattainable or undesirable. In these cases, in designing and executing a military strategy, the strategist must identify and recognize the point of victory.

(2) The military instrument must be wielded in combination with the other instruments of power. The use or threat of force must work in concert with the other instruments. Force and violence must be contained at appropriate levels to ensure it does not undermine the effectiveness of concurrent diplomatic, informational, and economic efforts and strategic designs. Since warfare emanates from a desire to produce a different state of affairs, preserving the effectiveness of the other instruments of power is essential to achieving the desired political and strategic objectives. Excessive force can diminish the utility of the non-military instruments of power, and thus irrevocably undermine the desired strategic end.

(3) Military operations may produce tactical and operational gains, but not achieve desired political objectives and enduring outcomes sought. Failure to translate military gains into strategic success may reflect, to some extent, a tendency to focus primarily on affecting the enemy's material capabilities rather than their will to develop and employ those capabilities.

4. Developing the Means

a. The means are the capabilities and resources one can bring to bear in the effort to attain the desired strategic ends. In warfare, the means employed are military capabilities and resources. Warfare is never, however, limited to purely military means. Each of the instruments of national power has its own essential role when adversaries go to war.

b. The 'DIME' acronym (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) has been used for many years to describe the instruments of national power. These elements align to the major executive branches applying the power: the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce, as well as the intelligence community.

(1) **Diplomatic Instrument.** The essence of the diplomatic instrument is engagement—how a nation interacts with state or non-state actors, generally to secure some form of agreement that allows the conflicting parties to coexist peacefully. Two important considerations for any strategist contemplating economic action in pursuit of strategic ends are globalization and the particular natures of individual state economies.

(a) Globalization has woven state economies worldwide into an increasingly interdependent web. A disturbance in one state's economy can reverberate widely across

the globe with unexpected consequences. Efforts to influence another's economy can end up producing unintended and often negative outcomes in one's own economy. States have less ability to shape their trade and financial activities to suit a particular strategic purpose when a considerable portion of their economic activity is controlled privately and they rely on free-market forces to generate economic prosperity.

(b) The more another state's economy is privatized and governed by free-market forces, the less effective trade, finance or aid actions will likely produce a particular strategic outcome. On the other hand, in states with authoritarian governments, the state's leaders can often redirect economic activity within the state to blunt the effects results of efforts to use economic tools to coerce the state.

(2) **Information Instrument.** The informational instrument is about creating, exploiting, and disrupting knowledge. A state or non-state actor generally benefits when it enjoys an information advantage over another party. Creating and exploiting that information advantage is key to the employment of the information instrument in NSS. The infrastructure, capabilities, and processes by which a state or non-state gathers, analyzes, disseminates, and exploits information are crucial foundational and institutional dimensions of power. Communication synchronization and information activities are two primary effects created to achieve the state's strategic informational objectives.

(a) Communication synchronization entails focused efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of national interests, policies, and objectives. It actively engages key audiences with coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power. Public diplomacy is good example of strategic communication.

(b) Information activities entail efforts by one party to deny another the ability to acquire and use information, and to protect and enhance its own ability to do the same. This includes protecting not only the information the state has, but also the capabilities for gathering information, analyzing and interpreting it, feeding knowledge gained into decision-making processes, and using information to shape and control state activities. In democratic states, increasingly, this inward focus also includes efforts to ensure the reliability of information available to one's domestic audience so that they can effectively exercise their democratic responsibilities.

(3) **Military Instrument.** The essence of the military instrument is the use of force by one party in an attempt to impose its will on another. This use can entail applying force, threatening the application of force, or enabling other parties to apply force in furtherance of strategic ends.

(a) Force can be applied across a broad spectrum and in multiple forms. It can occur in any domain (land, maritime, air, space) and the information environment (to include cyberspace).

(b) Threat of force is used to compel an adversary to modify current behavior or shape future action. It works by deploying and posturing military capabilities and issuing warning statements that convey a decision to use force if one's conditions are not met.

(c) Force enabling entails increasing the capability of international partners to apply force and usually occurs in close coordination with the diplomatic and economic instruments. It can include providing weapons and materiel, training and education, joint combined exercises, foreign internal defense, and advisory missions.

(d) Security cooperation sets conditions that prevent conflict, shape the security environment, compete for influence below the threshold of armed conflict, and prepare US forces to respond to contingencies. Security cooperation includes military engagements with foreign defense and security establishments, DOD-administered security assistance programs, combined exercises, international armaments cooperation, and information sharing and collaboration. Security cooperation programs and activities are normally integrated and synchronized with the other instruments of national power.

(4) Economic Instrument. The economic instrument focuses on furthering or constraining others' prosperity. Economic power is frequently considered the heart of national power. Whether the state has the economic power to pursue a particular strategy, or whether the effort to attain a strategic end will consume too much of the state's economic power are crucial national strategy judgments. Few, if any, strategies' ends are worth putting the nation's economic power in jeopardy. The economic instrument consists of the following basic capabilities:

(a) Trade of goods and services generally increases the wealth and prosperity of trading partners. Conversely, limits or restrictions on trade (including sanctions and tariffs) can harm an adversary's economy.

(b) Finance and access to capital markets is required for modern businesses to undertake investments to increase productive capacity, and for modern governments to provide expected services (infrastructure, health, welfare, education) to their citizens. Restricting or impeding access to finance and banking systems can undermine others' economic prosperity.

(c) Aid is money (or goods or materiel) given by one party to another to increase the recipient's capability and/or capacity. Granting aid adds to the recipient's ability to develop capabilities, while its withdrawal or reduction hinders that ability.

c. Despite how long the DIME has been used for describing the instruments of national power, US policy makers and strategists have long understood that there are many more instruments involved in national security policy development and implementation. Strategists should be aware that a whole-of-government view might better define US instruments of national power. However, the whole-of-government approach should not be viewed simply as everyone developing the respective plans and then coming together, piecing together the strategies, and deciding which way to go. When different agencies,

DESCRIBING THE ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER: CHANGING THE PARADIGM

New acronyms such as MIDFIELD (military, informational, diplomatic, financial, intelligence, economic, law, and development) convey a much broader array of options for the strategic and policymaker to use.

One of the most important additions to this new acronym is the letter L. Americans take great pride that their nation is governed by the rule of law. Reaffirming the American commitment to the rule of law by simply adding it to our national security dialogue is a step in the right direction to restoring what Joseph Nye termed soft power, which he defines as the “ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.” Nye contends that soft power “arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideas, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced” (Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, p. x). Ultimately, it is our policy actions and not our words that will carry the day, but we must begin by expanding our national security vocabulary.

Another important addition to this acronym is the D for development. The US Agency for international Development has played an integral role in advancing America’s soft power image since its foundation in 1961. Despite the agency’s numerous contributions to furthering US interests; until recently, it was rarely included in US foreign policy dialogue.

Recent Secretaries of State and Defense have both renewed the US commitment to the role of development by making it part of their 3D (diplomacy, development, and defense) approach to foreign policy. If American leaders wish to shape today’s environment, then development is, without questions, a key instrument of national security power.

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each wielding instruments of national power, do not coordinate sufficiently, there is the risk that agencies interpret national policy guidance differently and develop misaligned objectives. As a result, agencies develop different objectives and strategies, set different priorities, and ultimately fail to achieve a **unity of effort** toward attaining unified national strategic ends states.

5. Orchestrating the Instruments of National Power

a. Each instrument of national power works most effectively when it supports and operates harmoniously with the other instruments of national power. Consequently, the strategist should consider what the proposed strategy is asking each instrument to do at any point in time and space. The strategist should ensure each is doing all it can to achieve its particular objective and to support the efforts of the other instruments of national power. Moreover, at any point in time, one of the instruments is usually playing the principal role in advancing the strategy, while the others are supporting. Strategists normally seek to

attain strategic ends at as little cost in lives, resources, property damage, sovereignty, and stability to any of the involved parties as feasible considering national or multinational objectives. Strategists should take care to identify the right combination of instruments of national power. Strategists should also recognize and accept that the available combination of means will be greatly affected by the strategic ends sought and the kind of strategy pursued.

b. Military professionals naturally concentrate on the military means of strategy, but they should also be conscious to exploit and defend other means. They must effectively evaluate the utility of the military instrument. Force is an inappropriate tool for the solution of most political difficulties. Force is at best a necessary means for clearing obstacles to more peaceful solutions. In appraising the relationship between the military instrument and diplomacy, economics, and information in any given situation, military leaders must be prepared to ask the following three questions:

(1) How can military capabilities complement or assist the other instruments in achieving the political objective?

(2) How can diplomatic, informational, and economic capabilities aid military efforts?

(3) How might contemplated uses of force impede or imperil the achievement of the political objective?

6. Adapting the Means

a. Strategy discussions in the abstract often treat means as fixed. In practice, however, in the development and progress of a strategy, strategists frequently tend to adjust means. The occurrences of warfare, successes and failures, lessons learned, new concepts, the emergence of new technologies, the entry of new combatants, may cause the strategist to alter means as reframing occurs and an emergent strategy develops.

b. As resources increase, confidence in one's abilities grows, and as the enemy proves increasingly vulnerable, goals tend to expand. On the other hand, when resources or capabilities prove inadequate, ambitions ought to contract. Means are adjustable to some degree at every level. State or non-states can develop the means to attain their desired ends given time, will, and creativity.

7. Strategy's Relationship with Time

Strategic thinking requires the ability to foresee continuity of strategic choices with the past and the consequences of their intended or unintentional effects in the future. The strategist is concerned with continuity and change. The strategist extrapolates possible futures from the present situation and then constructs a paradigm of change from which strategic planning seeks to shape a more favorable future. Strategists deal with time horizons in terms of years and not only the immediate future.

AMERICA'S COLD WAR STRATEGY—ADJUSTING MEANS TO ENDS

An example of the different ways strategic means can be adjusted to match strategic ends can be found in America's shifting strategy during the Cold War. Beginning with the Truman administration, the American government pursued the political objective of containing the Soviet Union. The means adopted, however, evolved from administration to administration. President Eisenhower's administration employed a strategy labeled "massive retaliation," which relied on the United States' nuclear superiority to deter Soviet expansion. The Soviet Union enjoyed a huge conventional force superiority, but could not match American nuclear capability. Eisenhower wished to avoid building and maintaining large conventional forces, arguing that nuclear weapons provided "more bang for the buck." President Kennedy's administration had an entirely different approach to means. Partly because of the success of the massive retaliation strategy, the Soviets built up their nuclear arsenal to negate the US strategy. At the same time, they found a way around America's nuclear capability by sponsoring numerous "wars of national liberation."

When the resources and commitments needed to implement "flexible response" in Vietnam proved too costly, President Nixon's administration increased the emphasis on diplomatic means in its pursuit of the political objective of containment. Nixon's strategy of détente employed a combination of coercion and inducements designed to convince the Soviets to restrain themselves. Among those policies were the conduct of direct negotiations with the Soviet Union on issues such as arms control, the establishment of links to the People's Republic of China, and a new set of policies toward American allies subsequently known as "the Nixon doctrine."

The Nixon doctrine emphasized establishment of a series of bilateral and multilateral alliances to contain Soviet expansion. The United States would provide economic and military support to its allies, many of whom bordered the Soviet Union or one of its clients.

In 1981, with the country emerging from the national "soul searching" that followed its defeat in Vietnam, the incoming Reagan administration chose to adjust the means of containment one last time. Taking advantage of an economic upturn, Reagan embarked on a significant military buildup coupled with the development of new military technologies, particularly a ballistic missile defense capability and by aiding proxy forces in Afghanistan fighting the Soviets. Their efforts to match the increase in US defense resources cracked a state already beset by formidable political, economic, and social weaknesses, and in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed.

More recently in 2003, the US entered southern Iraq as liberators. When this assumption was disproved, the strategy changed to counterinsurgency that required a much longer time horizon.

Thus, over nearly half a century, the US adjusted the means brought to bear in its effort to produce the political objective it first adopted in 1947—containment of the Soviet Union. As these episodes from the Cold War and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM show, strategy is never static, and strategists must recommend adjustments to address current realities on the ground. Successes and failures, and the recognition of assumptions proved too bold or too timid, mandate strategists continually reassess their ends and means and the relationship between them.

Foundations of Strategic Logic
National War College

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CHAPTER III STRATEGIC WAYS

“The most complete and happy victory is this: to compel one’s enemy to give up his purpose, while suffering no harm oneself.”

Flavius Belisarius (505-565)

1. Introduction

Strategic ways are how the strategist proposes to use the means available, or can be developed, to attain the desired ends. Those ends consist of the national interests at stake in the security challenge at hand, the political objectives (the condition or state of affairs) that will secure the national interests at stake, and the subordinate objectives that must be accomplished.

2. Fundamental Strategic Approaches

a. The US is facing several complex challenges requiring innovative responses from rivals that it cannot optimally engage. These rivals are evading US strength by competing at levels below the threshold of a coercive US military response. They are contesting the rules and norms established in the post-WWII order to create a system more sympathetic to their interests.

b. Figure III-1 reflects a view of a the competitive environment characterized by US relationships with other actors relative to a specific interest or grouping of interests. It is more reflective of how nations, nation states, and non-state actors interact in a comprehensive and flexible spectrum of strategic relations. The relationships range from **peaceful cooperation**, to **competition below armed conflict**, to **armed conflict**. Moving

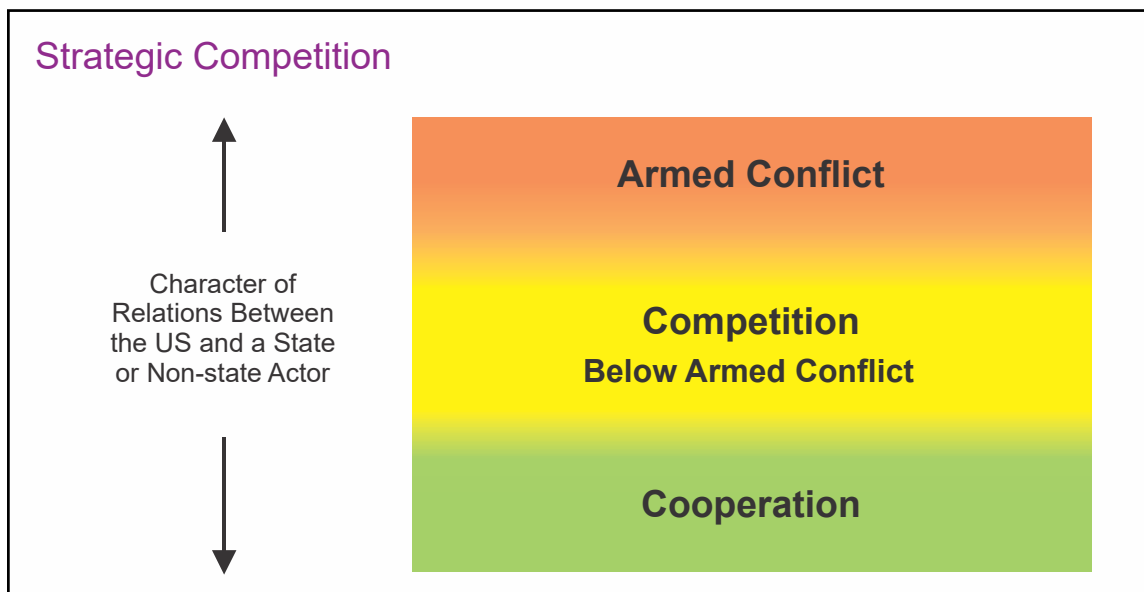


Figure III-1. Strategic Competition

through the spectrum crosses important conceptual thresholds as parties shift from generally friendly to increasingly adversarial interactions.

(1) **Cooperation** includes mutually beneficial relationships between strategic actors with similar or compatible interests. Although interests will rarely be in complete alignment, cooperative relations underpin the international order, enhance collective security, and deter conflict. Cooperation is the desired condition with the least cost and risk is cooperation, since actors primarily use cooperative activities to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships.

(2) **Competition below armed conflict** exists when two or more strategic actors view one another as competitors (as opposed to adversaries) that have incompatible interests. Competitors may cooperate with one another or engage in behavior detrimental to other strategic actor's interests (e.g., removing 'most favored nation' status or increasing tariffs). Influence (pressure to act a certain way) and coercion (the use of threats to influence the behavior of an adversary) are central to the condition of competition below armed conflict.

(3) **Armed conflict** involves the use of force as the primary means by which a strategic actor seeks to satisfy its interests or react to provocation. Armed conflict involves the highest intensity of coercive force.

c. Across the strategic competition environment, the actors may employ numerous approaches in dealing with strategic challenges. The broad strategic approach chosen will then shape the ways each of the instruments of national power is brought to bear to deal with the challenge and to produce the desired strategic end.

(1) **Observe** is the least active strategic approach and is often appropriate when threats to interests are minimal, international partners independently address an issue sufficiently, or when assessed costs and risks of greater action outweigh potential benefits.

(2) **Accommodate** involves acceding to others' interests to attain the desired strategic end. Depending on the situation, accommodation can take multiple forms, including appeasement, adaptation, abrogation, retraction, abandonment, etc.

(3) **Compromise** is reached when parties adjust conflicting or opposing positions to achieve a mutually agreed end state without violating either's core values. Compromise should not be regarded in the context of win/lose.

(4) **Shape** may be appropriate when threats are not immediate or severe and an opportunity creates a chance to mold the general strategic situation in one's favor.

(5) **Persuade** has limited application, and generally entails trying to convince another actor through force of argument. Where the parties' interests align or overlap, persuasion may be viable. Otherwise, its utility is often restricted.

(6) **Enable** occurs when interests align, to improve capability of an actor already taking action that will produce or benefit one's strategic end. Enabling can occur in myriad

ways, such as force enabling of a partner military, or providing information or financial aid.

(7) **Induce** involves offering something positive, for example promises of aid, security guarantees, or tariff concessions. Inducement differs from enabling as it seeks to change another state or actor's behavior.

(8) **Assure** entails the forward presence or stationing of military capabilities in a friendly country that provides political leverage giving substance to diplomacy and credibility to agreements.

(9) **Deter** involves the defensive use of credible threats generally to preserve the status quo. Threatens negative reaction in response to adversary aggression. Deterrence seeks to change the risk/reward calculation of the adversary thus preventing undesirable action and preserving the status quo. Ultimately leaves the choice to act or not act with the adversary.

(10) **Coercion** persuades an adversary to stop an ongoing action or start a new course of action by changing their cost/benefit analysis.

(11) **Compel** refers to the use of credible threats or actual actions that seek to change the status quo. Compellence threatens imposition or continuation of a condition undesirable to the adversary until they accede to demands. Compel involves the use of unlimited or decisive force to remove the ability to resist.

(12) **Subdue** involves applying sufficient force to make an adversary do what one wants, essentially removing any response other than capitulation. Subdue is generally heavy on force and often includes occupation, regime change, and destruction or severe degradation of the adversary's capacity to employ force.

(13) **Eradicate** seeks the absolute elimination of the target state or actor, including, possibly, the ideology guiding it.

d. Present realities and future uncertainties prompt a paradigm shift in the way strategists view the strategic security environment. The model in Figure III-1 describes a comprehensive approach to understanding strategic relationships in an increasingly complex world. Categorizing relationships in terms of **cooperation**, **competition below armed conflict**, and **armed conflict** equips joint leaders with an improved lexicon for providing best military advice and guidance.

3. Relationship Between Strategic Ends and Military Ways

a. Military leaders spend a tremendous amount of time and effort developing and planning the instruments of national power to wage warfare. The immediate threat posed by an adversary can force leaders to think and react in the present without sufficient flexibility to adapt to future conditions. Time constraints and insufficient information can also limit choices available to leaders. Planning for conflict termination is just as important as designing a successful military campaign. The whole point of warfare is to seek a better

or more permanent political condition, however a nation ends its war with a foe can determine future relations. If the state's strategic end is the elimination of the opponent as a political entity, and it chooses to employ force in the effort to attain its strategic ends, then eradication will likely, though not always, be the most appropriate military strategy. Military strategies of eradication are conceptually simple. The focus of operational efforts is the enemy's armed forces; the object is to render them powerless. While those forces may be destroyed in battle, they also may be rendered powerless in other ways, for example: through destruction of the social or industrial infrastructure that supports them.

b. In deciding the best way to employ military force, there are different tacks a strategist can take to build a strategic design. In deciding how to orient a particular strategic design, the strategist needs to consider whether a particular mode of action fits the strategic situation, will attain strategic end and achieve its subordinate objectives, and can do so with the available means at acceptable levels of cost and risk.

CHAPTER IV ASSESSING STRATEGY

“No plan of operation extends with certainty beyond contact with the enemy’s main hostile force.”

**Field Marshal General Helmuth von Moltke the Elder Chief
of the German General Staff (1857-1888)**

1. Introduction

Assessing the costs and risks stemming from a strategic plan is the fifth fundamental element of the strategic logic formulation model presented in Chapter 1. Assessing costs and risks must permeate the process of developing strategy. Both analyzing the strategic situation and assessing risks and costs should not be applied iteratively and with regular frequency. Strategies normally lack the resources or the ability to employ them in a manner sufficient for complete assurance of success. As a result, a final and essential test is to assess the risk of less than full attainment of strategic objectives, as well as assess the risk of second and third order effects that strategy implementation could have (e.g., effects on the economy, relationships with allies, etc.). Living with risk is part of the strategist’s business in the modern world, and being able to articulate its character and extent is one of the initial steps in reducing its impact.

2. Continual Assessment

a. Continuous assessment should be a formalized, recurring process during the life of the strategy that assesses and evaluates the strategy’s ends, ways, means, and risks against the evolving realities and possibilities in the strategic environment.

b. The strategic environment is dynamic and continuous change is inherent to it. Successful strategies may present new opportunities or require a new strategy to account for the conditions of success. Strategies that are failing beg for replacement. Unforeseen changes in the strategic environment that may occur justify modification of some aspects of an existing strategy, but are not significant enough to invalidate the entire strategy.

c. National interests and policies often change over time. As a result, new strategies or modifications to extant strategies may be appropriate. Ideally, properly formulated strategy is constructed with inherent flexibility and adaptability in its ends, ways, and means—in the strategy itself. Continuous changes beyond requirements of success, failure and changed conditions, or beyond the control of the strategist, may be an indicator of poor strategic thinking or a flawed strategy formulation process. Proposed strategies for which the likely costs significantly exceed the value of the hoped-for benefits ought to be rethought. This cost-benefit analysis reinforces the criticality of having defined precisely the interests at stake in the problem, the value of those interests, threats to those interests, and the seriousness of those threats. The essential question in the cost-benefit analysis of any strategy is whether it protects/advances the state’s interests at an acceptable cost.

Ultimately, many national strategy debates revolve around value tradeoffs (e.g., lives vs. economic harm, that are difficult, if not impossible, to resolve).

3. Costs and Risks

a. Costs represent the outlay of resources and other assets needed to attain strategic ends. They include the funding required to acquire, build, enable, protect, convert, achieve, or maintain something of strategic value, whether tangible or intangible. Costs also can include people killed and injured; infrastructure damaged or destroyed, diminished capital, accumulated debt, weakened economy, or diminished influence. They can be transactional, political, temporal, or stem from forfeited opportunities.

b. Risks are elements that could go wrong in a strategy. Risk severity is determined by both the likelihood of its occurrence and the magnitude of damage that would ensue if the risk became manifest and risks you assume elsewhere against other adversaries when executing a strategy and committing finite means. Thus, a state that employs force against an enemy that possesses nuclear weapons runs the risk that state will retaliate with a nuclear strike. The magnitude of the ensuing damage would be huge, but if there is little or no likelihood that the other state would respond with a nuclear strike, then the severity of the risk is diminished dramatically.

c. There is no magic formula for calculating risk. Risks emerge as the strategist brings insightful, objective analysis and judgment to bear on what research and intelligence has revealed about the nature and dynamics of the problem. Despite the strategist's best efforts, however, both the likelihood and severity of any identified risks and potential mitigation measures will remain only probabilities. Therefore, it is critical that the strategist develops a scheme for valuing both the likelihood and the severity of risks and uses that scheme to characterize each of the risks considered by decision makers. Strategists must assess both risks to the strategy and risks from the strategy.

d. Risks to the strategy are things that could cause it to fail, and they arise particularly from assumptions that prove invalid in whole or in part. Risks from the strategy are additional threats, costs, or otherwise undesired consequences caused by the strategy's implementation.

4. Assessing Validity

a. Throughout the strategy development process, strategists must continuously assess and reassess their strategy's validity. Multiple factors can affect a strategy's prospects for successful implementation. Strategists should use several criteria allow them to use the "...ilities" tests, which allow them to evaluate the strategy from multiple vantage points. There are several versions of the "...ilities," but at a minimum, a strategist should begin by considering:

(1) **Suitability** addresses whether the strategy will attain the desired ends. Will it protect/advance the national interests at stake, attain the desire ends, and not work against other national-level strategies, policies, and goals?

(2) **Feasibility** examines whether the nation can afford the proposed strategy. Are sufficient means available (or attainable) to attain the strategic ends? Can the necessary resources and popular support be sustained long enough to attain the strategic ends? Will the national economy be able to absorb the overall costs of the strategic effort without putting in jeopardy other, higher priority strategic ends?

(3) **Acceptability** examines the strategy's practicality and rationality. Will the expected benefits of achieving attaining the strategic end outweigh the anticipated costs? Is the plan of action consistent with the state's values, the national mood, domestic concerns, and partners' interests and the personal goals of political national leaders?

b. Strategists must continuously apply these basic validity tests of validity throughout the strategy development process. If the answer to any one of these tests is ever "no," then the strategist should modify or develop a new strategic approach that ensures an affirmative answer to all the "...ilities" tests.

5. Course Corrections

a. No strategy is infallible. Strategies are built upon a foundation of assumptions, some of those assumptions will prove flawed to some degree. As objectives and ends change to address current realities and emerging problem sets, the strategist must adjust the strategy's ends, ways, and/or means to accommodate the new reality. Some of the most powerful and insidious assumptions are unconscious judgments about the how the adversary will react to the various aspects of the strategy.

b. Those involved with analyzing complex situations and making conclusions are prone to the influences that shape and mold their view of the world and their ability to reason. Adversaries act in line with their own interests, logic, and analyses of the situation, which may lead them to respond in unexpected ways. Moreover, adversaries are not passive targets of a strategy, but active players invested in the outcome. As such, they will do all they can to frustrate or prevent an opposing plan's success, and to maximize their own gains.

c. Successful execution of any strategy entails constant adjustments to an adversary's moves, both those that are integral to his strategy, and those he takes in response to his opponent's strategic moves. As soon as a strategy is put into action, it begins changing the strategic situation in numerous ways. The adversary or enemy is also a strategic actor, with his own strategy that has passed its own tests of costs and benefits. The implementation of strategy is a test of which actor can best and more rapidly adapt to the other. Analyzing the strategic situation is one of the fundamental elements of strategic logic. As the situation changes, the strategist must revisit his analysis to ensure the plan of action continues to rest on a comprehensive, objective and insightful appreciation of the most important conditions and dynamics shaping the unfolding strategic situation, and how they are doing so. As with assumptions that later prove flawed, significant changes in the strategic situation should force the strategist to adjust the strategy's ends, means, and/or ways.

6. Recognizing and Avoiding Traps

Given the complexity of designing strategy, it is understandable that some strategists seek ways to simplify the process. There are, however, several traps to recognize and avoid:

a. **Searching for Strategic Panaceas.** Strategists have long sought strategic panaceas: prescriptions that will guarantee success in any situation. The strategic panacea denies any need for understanding the unique characteristics or context of each strategic situation, offering instead a ready-made and universal solution or defaulting to a successful approach from a previous conflict with similar (but not same) set of circumstances and conditions. In the mid-1800s, Army officers left West Point immersed in the example and concepts of Napoleonic warfare: offensive action; rapid, disruptive maneuver; and decisive battle. However, the American Civil War demonstrated that the growth of nationalism and the ability to mobilize society, along with the emergence of technologies such as the rifled musket, railroads, and the telegraph, had made rapid offensive maneuver to bring about a climactic decisive battle a thing of the past.

b. **Emphasizing Process over Product.** A second trap is the attempt to reduce the development of strategy to a routine. The danger in standardizing strategy making is accepting that the process alone will ensure development of sound strategies. Just as there is no strategic panacea, there is no optimal process for developing strategy. Nonetheless, to simplify, standardize, and control the strategy-making process, political organizations, bureaucracies, and military staffs normally seek to systematize the development of strategy. Such systems make a useful contribution. When the entire process of developing strategy is run by routine, the outcome is unimaginative, pedestrian and predictable strategies that adversaries can easily anticipate and counter. The key to the effective development of a strategy is how objective, open-minded, insightful, and creative the strategist is in answering all the fundamental questions inherent in each of the five fundamental elements of strategic logic the strategist employed.

c. **Seeking the Decisive Fait Accompli.** A fait accompli, or “done deal”, aims to present an adversary with a political/military achievement that cannot be undone. The danger is that what was intended can open the door to a more extended conflict or commitment. In 1982, the Argentines attempted a fait accompli by swiftly seizing the nearby British-governed Falkland Islands. Rather than accept the Argentine action, however, Great Britain mounted a months-long expeditionary campaign that took the islands back at some cost to the Argentine military. Indeed, the Argentine leaders who started the conflict were soon deposed. Whether a fait accompli works as designed depends almost wholly, on whether and how the targeted party chooses to respond.

d. Using labels such as **limited warfare** in attempting to simplify the nature of the problem. When a superior power goes to war against a distinctly less capable enemy, it generally can defeat conventional military forces relatively quickly and easily with a relatively limited effort and commitment of resources. Thus, there is a tendency for the superior power to consider that effort a “limited war,” and to shape its strategy and expectations accordingly. However, the strategic outcome often drives its intensity rather

than the means employed. This can create an asymmetry of interests that works to the disadvantage of the superior power. The result can be the enemy's willingness to wage warfare at an unexpected level of intensity that forces the superior power to expend resources and effort at a rate that is disproportionate to the interests at stake. The "limited" warfare the superior power envisioned at the outset has now escalated, probably significantly. Witness the American efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

e. **Mismatching Political-Military Outcomes.** Clausewitz emphasizes that the sole purpose of warfare should be to attain a desired strategic end. Any effective military strategy must be grounded in policy and national interests to effectively achieve results that will attain the desired strategic end. Often however, there is no connection between the destruction caused and the strategic ends sought. While military operations can impose costs of various kinds on the enemy, in the end, the enemy has to change his behavior for the strategy to succeed. It is hard to know how much and what kind of military action needed to produce the enemy's desired behavior. Enemies often react quite differently—and usually less desirably—than the strategist anticipates to military operations designed to produce a change in their behavior. To be effective, a military strategy in pursuit of a strategic end must lay out a scheme of operations that will prompt the enemy's decision to modify his behavior as the strategist desires. Military action can defeat the enemy security forces, remove the regime, restore security, repair/rebuild infrastructure, foster the regeneration of the economy, and even provide governance and essential social services. However, unless the objective is to replace the eliminated regime with a military occupation government indefinitely, extensive skilled and creative political action will eventually be required to enable an effective government to emerge. Even had the US leaned predominantly on its non-military instruments to carry out the "nation building" task in Afghanistan and Iraq, it would have discovered quickly that those instruments were woefully under-resourced for the task because the political, social, cultural, and economic dynamics make nation-building an almost impossible task.

7. Evaluating Strategy

a. The preeminent metric for judging a strategy's success is whether it achieves the desired political aim at an acceptable cost. As a strategy proceeds, the strategist must constantly and honestly judge the prospects of achieving the political aim. At some point, if those prospects are not increasing—or worse, are decreasing—then one must explore alternative courses of action. This might entail defining a new political aim, bringing new or additional means to bear, formulating a new strategic approach, or abandoning the effort altogether. In assessing an ongoing effort, the strategist must focus on the desired outcome, especially when waging war. It does not matter if one is winning on the battlefield if the cumulative effects of tactical/operational victories are not helping achieve the desired political aim. In Vietnam, the US won most of the battles but failed utterly to achieve its political aim. The only test of a successful strategy is whether it produces the outcome sought, at an acceptable cost.

b. As discussed in Chapter II, strategists must rely on logic if they hope to produce an effective strategy. The key to the effective development of a strategy is how objective, open-minded, insightful, and creative the strategist is in answering all the fundamental

questions inherent in whichever strategy development model, framework, or methodology the strategist employs. While organizations normally establish a subordinate directorate and process for strategy making, it may find that directorate may not always be the ideal entity to bring the necessary degree of objectivity, open-mindedness, insight, and/or creativity to bear on developing a strategy to deal with the problem. Process should yield to a determination to obtain the highest quality product when it comes to developing strategy.

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GLOSSARY
PART I—ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND INITIALISMS

CCP	Command Campaign Plan
DIME	diplomatic, informational, military, and economic
DOD	Department of Defense
JDN	joint doctrine note
JP	joint publication
NMS	national military strategy
NSS	national security strategy

PART II—TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

national military strategy. A document approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for distributing and applying military power to attain national security strategy and National Defense Strategy objectives. Also called NMS. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 1)

national security interests. The foundation for the development of valid national objectives that define United States goals or purposes. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 1)

national security strategy. A document approved by the President of the United States for developing and coordinating the instruments of national power to achieve objectives that contribute to national security. Also called NSS. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 1)

strategic direction. The strategy and intent of the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in pursuit of national interests. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 5-0)

strategic guidance. The written products by which the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provide strategic direction. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 5-0)

strategy. A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 3-0)

theater strategy. An overarching construct outlining a combatant commander's vision for integrating and synchronizing military activities and operations with the other instruments of national power in order to achieve national strategic objectives. (DOD Dictionary. Source: JP 3-0)

