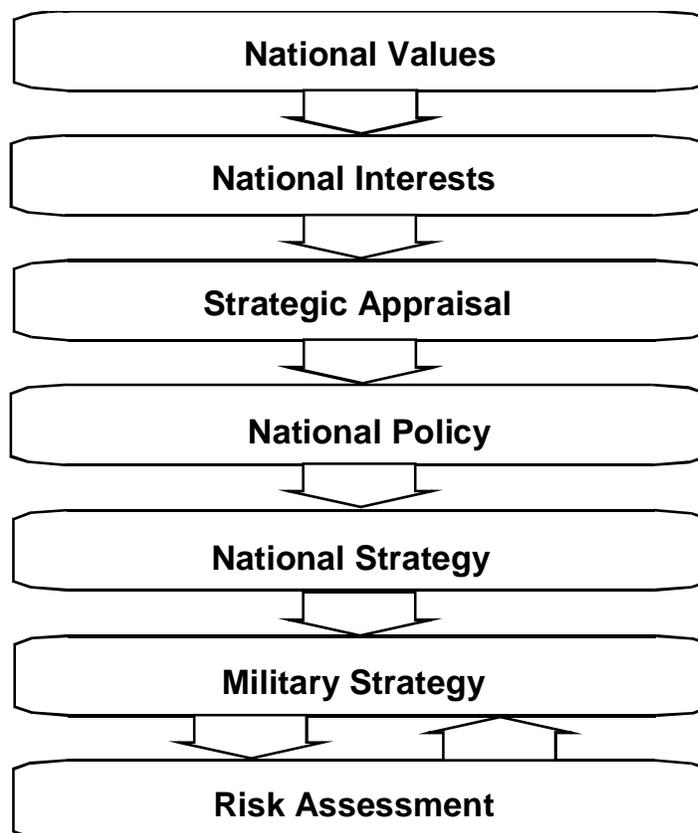


APPENDIX I

GUIDELINES FOR STRATEGY

I. General. Strategy is an art, and a highly creative one at that. It is also somewhat scientific, in that it follows certain patterns which require a common understanding of terminology, adherence to certain principles, and disciplined, albeit creative, thought processes. In that spirit, offered herein are some guidelines, definitions, and rules of thumb. The structure, definitions and processes described here are the basis for instruction in Strategy Formulation for the students at the U.S. Army War College (USAWC). The term "guidelines" best describes their intended use. They are not prescriptive in nature but preceptual concepts to assist the strategic leader in constructively developing national policies and strategies in an extremely complex international environment.

II. Strategy Formulation Guidelines. Understanding that these are guidelines and not formulas, strategy will be developed in keeping with the particular features of the time, place and personalities involved. Nevertheless, the USAWC guidelines offer an approach to address the complexities of strategy formulation, and are intended for strategists attempting to achieve the coherence, continuity, and consensus that policy makers seek in designing, developing and executing national security and military strategies.



III. National Strategy (or National Security Strategy or “Grand Strategy”).

A. **National Values.** U.S. national values represent the legal, philosophical and moral basis for continuation of the American system. U.S. values are the core of national interests.

B. **National Interest.** Nations, like individuals, have interests—derived from their innate values and perceived purposes—which motivate their actions. National interests are a nation’s perceived needs and aspirations largely in relation to its external environment. Hence, U.S. national interests determine our involvement in the rest of the world, provide the focus of our actions to assure their protection, and thus, are the starting point for defining national security objectives and then formulating national security policy and strategy.

1. As a rule of thumb, interests are stated as fundamental concerns of the nation, and written as desirable conditions without verbs, action modifiers, or intended actions. For example, U.S. national interests might be stated as:

a. Access to raw materials — (Not—protecting sources of raw materials).

b. Unrestricted passage through international waters— (Not—securing sealines of communications).

2. For simplicity and taking our cue from Nuechterlein and Blackwill,¹ we group national interests into four categories and three degrees of intensity.

a. *Categories* help us to organize. Keep in mind the breakdown is normally artificial. Thus, while “Unrestricted access to Persian Gulf Oil” as a U.S. national interest has a primary category of “Economic Well-Being” for the U.S. and its allies, it also ties into the other three categories of national interest used by the USAWC. The four categories are:

(1) Defense of the Homeland

(2) Economic Well-being

(3) Favorable World Order

(4) Promotion of Values

b. *Intensity of interests* helps us to determine priority of interests, recognizing that without prioritization, there is the potential for unlimited derivative objectives and the consequent mismatch of those objectives (ends) with resources (means), which are always finite.

(1) The current National Security Strategy document lists three degrees of intensity: VITAL, IMPORTANT, HUMANITARIAN.

(2) The USAWC modifies and expands Blackwill's core national objectives to create core national interests which correspond generally to the four categories listed in paragraph III.B.2.a. above:

(a) Defense of the Homeland. Physical Security refers to the protection against attack on the territory and people of a nation-state in order to ensure survival with fundamental values and political systems intact.

(b) Economic Prosperity.

(c) Promotion of Values.

(d) Favorable World Order. Note that Blackwill does not use this category because "its universalism makes it exceedingly difficult to distinguish between more and less important U.S. national security interests." This, of course, is a problem that policymakers in the post-Cold War era face on a daily basis.

(3) The three USAWC degrees of intensity are determined by answering the question: What happens if the interest is not realized?

(a) *Vital* — if unfulfilled, will have immediate consequence for core national interests.

(b) *Important* — if unfulfilled, will result in damage that will eventually affect core national interests.

(c) *Peripheral* — if unfulfilled, will result in damage that is unlikely to affect core national interests.

C. Strategic Appraisal.

1. The strategic appraisal begins with the sorting out of interests by category and intensity using the general criteria above.

2. The next step is examining the domestic and international environments to ascertain the challenges (forces, trends, opportunities and threats) that affect national interests.

a. In particular, in assessing the relationship of an external threat to a national security interest, the USAWC uses the following Blackwill criteria to relate the effects on that interest with what the USAWC terms the core national interests (See above):

(1) Immediacy in terms of time.

(2) Geographic proximity.

(3) Magnitude.

(4) “Infectious” dimensions.

(5) Connectivity — How many links in a chain of events from threat (situation/event) to core national interest.

b. It is important that this step take place after the sorting out of interests by category and intensity. The degree of intensity of an interest, in particular, should be determined **before** a detailed analysis of threats to those interests. It is important that interests not become a function of a particular threat. If a government begins with a threat assessment before a conceptualization of interest intensity, it may react to a threat with major commitments and resources devoid of any rational linkage to that intensity. Rational cost-benefit analysis should not be allowed to affect the intensity of interest. Although U.S. administrations sensibly make just such cost-benefit calculations, Blackwill points out that:

these should be analytically independent from judgements about how important to the United States a particular national security interest is. We may choose to defend a peripheral U.S. interest because it is not costly to do so; the interest nevertheless is still peripheral. Or we may choose not to defend vigorously an important-hopefully not vital-U.S. national security interest because we decide it is too expensive in a variety of ways to do so; the interest nevertheless is still important, and we may well pay dearly for our unreadiness to engage.

3. The appraisal must be more than a listing of challenges. To be useful, an appraisal must analyze and explain which and in what ways U.S. interests are affected. The assessment should seek to identify opportunities and threats to U.S. interests. As a consequence, the strategic appraisal will not only be influenced by current national policy, but will help identify recommendations to change existing policies.

4. Following is an outline for developing a strategic appraisal.

Step 1: Determine U.S. Interests

— By category: defense of the homeland; economic well-being; favorable world order; promotion of values.

— By intensity: vital; important; peripheral.

Step 2: Identify and Assess Challenges to U.S. Interests

— Defense Trends (Threats & Opportunities)

— Economic Trends (Threats & Opportunities)

— World Order Trends (Threats & Opportunities)

— Promotion of Values Trends (Threats & Opportunities)

Step 3: Comparison to U.S. National Strategy. Discuss where your assessment agrees or differs from the current U.S. national security strategy, and the reasons you disagree.

Step 4: Policy Recommendations. Based on this assessment, present policy recommendations for national diplomatic, economic, and military policies that must be changed currently and in the future to protect against threats and to take advantage of existing opportunities.

D. National Policy. To secure our national interests, the national political leadership establishes policies to guide the formulation of a national strategy. National policy is a broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives.

E. National Strategy. (synonymous with national security strategy). The art and science of developing and using all the elements of national power during peace and war to secure national interests.

1. Various agencies of government contribute to the several components of national strategy, with the President—assisted by the National Security Council (NSC) and Staff—as the final integrator. Since the Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the President's National Security Strategy document is the authoritative unclassified statement of our national strategy.

2. You must be able to develop strategies employing all of the elements of power. Remember, the formulation of national strategy, as it does at any level of strategy, employs the strategic thought process based on the use of Ends, Ways, and Means:

a. National Objectives — ENDS.

b. National Strategic Concepts — WAYS.

c. National Resources — MEANS.

F. Military Strategy. Military strategy is meaningful only in the policy context outlined above.

Military Strategy — The art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or the threat of force.

Military Strategy = Objectives + Strategic Concepts + Resources

Generic	Military	Answers
Ends	Objectives	What?
Ways	Concepts	How? (+Where & When)
Means	Resources	With What?

The next crucial step then, is translating **national policy objectives** and guidance into clear, concise, and achievable **military objectives**.

1. **Military Objectives.** *What* is to be achieved by the military element of power? As a rule of thumb, military objectives should:

—be appropriate, explicit, finite, achievable, and, if necessitated by policy guidance, limited in scope. (Test this by asking yourself if, as a CINC, you would know exactly what you would be expected to accomplish by national leadership).

—directly secure one (or more) stated interest(s). An effective first step in articulating a military objective is to attach an appropriate verb to each previously identified interest. For example:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Interest: | access to raw materials |
| Objective: | secure access to raw materials |
| Interest: | a region free of conflict |
| Objective: | deter intraregional conflict |
| Interest: | survival of Country X |
| Objective: | defend Country X |

If no realizable military objective can be articulated to satisfy a given interest, a policy choice to use the military element of power should be questioned.

2. **Military Strategic Concepts.** Strategic concepts are broad courses of action or *ways* military power might be employed to achieve the aforesaid objective. They answer the question of "*How*." Here is where the originality, imagination, and creativity of the strategist come into play. As Clausewitz observed, there are many *ways* to achieve a given end; presumably many can be right, but real genius lies in finding the best. As a rule of thumb:

—Each military objective must have one (or more) concept(s) detailing *how* means (resources) are to relate to ends (objectives).

—Stated strategic concepts represent the preferred options of the possible courses of action considered.

—Strategic concepts also detail when, where, phasing, sequencing, roles, priorities, etc., as appropriate.

Example:

Interest: Access to Middle-East oil

Objective: Secure sea lines of communication to the Middle-East

Strategic Concept: U.S. naval forces and embarked land forces will maintain a periodic presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in peacetime; be prepared to provide full-time presence in crisis; and be prepared to achieve naval superiority in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in wartime.

3. **Military Resources.** Finally, the strategy must have resources—i.e., military forces and means implied by the objectives and concepts identified. Military resources are often stated as forces (divisions, wings, naval groups), but might include things such as time, effort, organization, people, etc. As a rule of thumb:

—Military resources must be identified for each objective and concept articulated.

—Supportability of forces should be addressed (in terms of strategic lift, sustainability, host nation support, reinforcements, etc.).

—For Example:

One Carrier Battle Group (CBG) with an embarked Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will deploy to X ocean on a quarterly basis . . .

A permanent Joint Task Force (JTF) will be established to Two CONUS-based Divisions, one Special Forces Group and two Tactical Fighter Wings, supported by . . . will be prepared to . . .

Identification of resource implications, while completing the strategy, should be the first step in testing its internal logic. You should now think backward through the process to ensure the forces envisioned are adequate to implement the concepts, that the concepts achieve stated objectives, that the military objectives correctly satisfy the policy objectives and protect the national interests identified, and so forth.

G. **Risk Assessment.** As almost no strategy has resources sufficient for complete assurance of success, a final and essential test is to assess the risk of less than full attainment of objectives. Living with risk is part of our business in the modern world, and

being able to articulate its extent is the first step in reducing its impact. Where the risk is determined to be unacceptable, the strategy must be revised. Basically there are three ways:

—Reduce the objectives.

—Change the concepts.

—Increase the resources.

In other words, the strategist must reconcile the ends, ways and means to minimize the risk inherent in a particular strategy.

IV. Conclusion. This thought process applies equally to national strategy, national military strategy, and theater military strategy.

ENDNOTES - APPENDIX I

1. See Donald E. Neuchterlein, "National Interest as a Basis of Foreign Policy Formulation," in Neuchterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interest in the 1980's* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1985) and Robert D. Blackwill, "A Taxonomy for Defining US National Security Interests in the 1990's and Beyond" in Verner Veidenfeld and Josef Janning (ed.), *Europe in Global Change* (Bertelsmann, 1993).