

APPENDIX I

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE GUIDELINES FOR STRATEGY FORMULATION

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

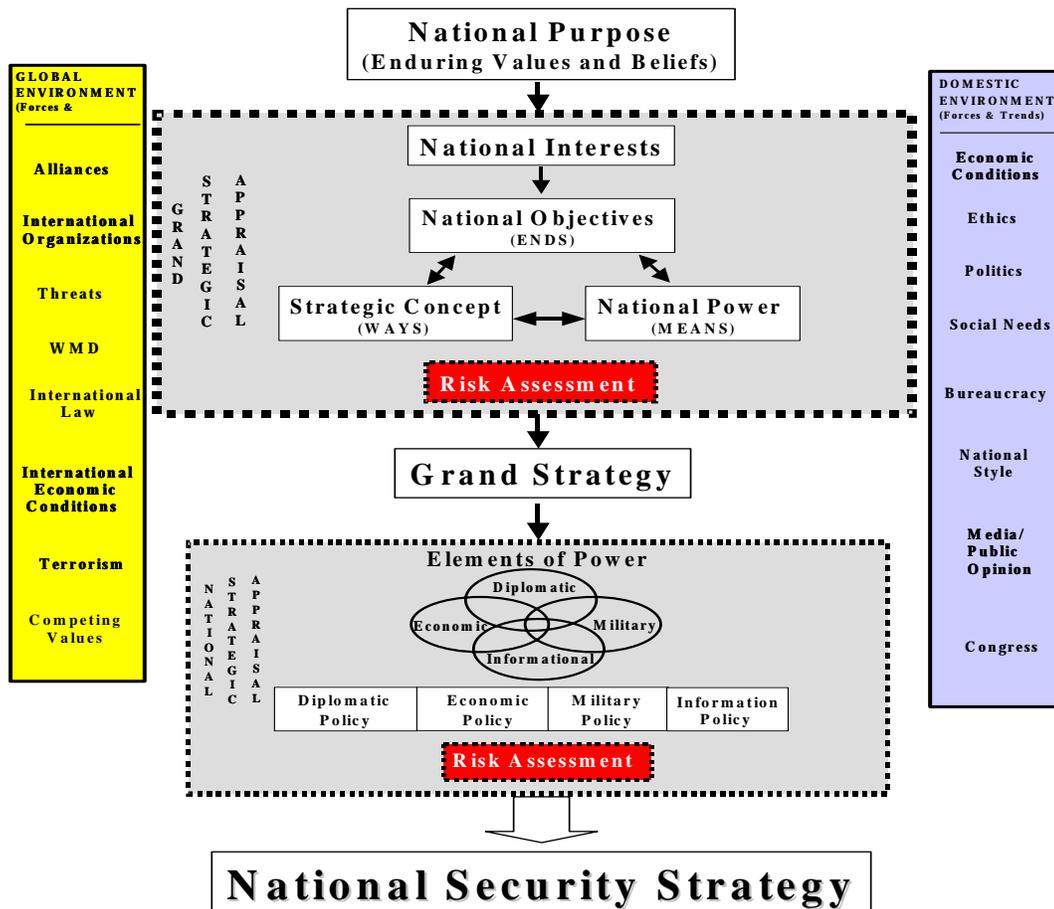


Figure 1. USAWC Strategy Formulation Model.

National Purpose.

This is the start point for the entire process. Enduring values and beliefs embodied in the national purpose represent the legal, philosophical, and moral basis for continuation of the American system. From the nation's purpose as well as an understanding of the nation's domestic and global needs, the United States derives its enduring core national interests in the grand strategic appraisal process. The strategist should return to these considerations in terms of risk assessment at every derivative level of strategic appraisal.

Grand Strategic Appraisal.

This appraisal reflects a macro process focused on the broadest aspects of the strategic ends-ways-means paradigm. The goal of the grand strategic appraisal is the development of a nation's grand strategy defined as the use of all U.S. national elements of power in peace and war to support a strategic vision of America's role in the world that will best achieve the nation's core objectives.

Grand Strategic Interests/Ends: There are three core U.S. national interests: physical security, defined as the protection against attack on the territory and people of the United States in order to ensure survival with fundamental values and institutions intact; promotion of values; and economic prosperity. The core interests are translated into the grand strategic objectives: preserve American security, bolster American economic prosperity, and promote American values. All administrations focus on these three objectives, but depending on a host of variables ranging from circumstances to personalities, presidents may choose to emphasize one objective over the others. For the incoming Carter administration, the initial emphasis was on human rights; for the Reagan administration, it was security; and for the Clinton administration, it was the economy. Security is once again the top priority, but in an increasingly globalized world populated by non-state actors with possible access to weapons of mass destruction, achieving physical security paradoxically may require an equal emphasis on promoting democratic values and generating global economic prosperity.

Grand Strategic Ways: At the grand strategic level, the ways are based on the national leadership's strategic vision of America's role in the world that U.S. leaders believe will best achieve U.S. core national objectives.

1. Throughout America's history, this vision has ranged from isolationism to global engagement based on American preponderance. In order to be effective, each new administration has to express a vision for the U.S. role in the world that doesn't outrun the experience of the American people, and thus lose the decisive authority or domestic consensus to implement the strategic vision. Is the vision, in other words, suitable and acceptable?

2. President Franklin Roosevelt, for example, had to act carefully prior to World War II as he moved the American grand strategic vision from isolationism to one of global engagement. And within five years after the end of that war, the perception of external threat allowed President Truman to gain support for the grand strategic vision of containment—focused on containing the Soviet Union on the Eurasian land mass.

Grand Strategic Means: The grand strategic means involves the consideration of America's national elements of power at the broadest level. Given the state of the international and domestic environment and the scope of the administration's grand strategic vision of the U.S. role in the world, a key consideration is the feasibility of employing sufficient U.S. national power to achieve the core objectives.

Risk Assessment: At any level of strategic appraisal, the combination of concepts and resources is

normally not sufficient for full attainment of objectives. At the grand strategic level, the assessment of such risk can be extremely complex. Global engagement as a grand strategy, for example, helps the U.S. in terms of security, economic prosperity, and promotion of values. At the same time, the backlash against what are perceived as U.S. economic and cultural dominance of the process of globalism, as well as American military forward presence, has also unleashed threats to all three core objectives.

Grand Strategy.

Based on the grand strategic appraisal, the U.S. political leadership provides national policy in the form of broad guidance concerning America's global role in pursuit of the core national objectives. This policy constitutes the U.S. grand strategy and is the starting point for the national security strategic assessment. It comes in many iterative and cumulative forms ranging from formal national security directives, to pronouncements in presidential and cabinet-level speeches, to presidential replies to press queries or cabinet-level appearances on current affairs television shows.

National Security Strategic Appraisal.

General.

1. Inherent in this more detailed national security strategic appraisal, or in any derivative appraisals such as those at the national military strategic and regional strategic levels, is an appropriate degree of analysis designed to illuminate alternatives in the face of recognized uncertainties. A general outline for a strategic appraisal follows:

- a. Identify U.S. interests.
- b. Determine level of intensity for each interest.
- c. Evaluate the issues, trends, and challenges (threats and opportunities) in regard to interests.
- d. Determine objectives (ends).
- e. Consider alternative concepts (ways) that utilize available or needed resources (means) to achieve objectives.
- f. Conduct a risk assessment.
- g. Present policy recommendations.

2. 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. The appraisal should address some if not all of the following questions:

- a. What is the current U.S. policy or precedent?
- b. Who are the other critical actors?
- c. What are their interests and/or policies?
- d. With whom does the U.S. have convergence or divergence of interest/policy?
- e. What are the feasible options to employ the U.S. elements of power to achieve the policy options under consideration?

3. The strategy formulation guidelines delineated above apply equally to national security strategy, national military strategy, and theater military strategy. The strategist must be able to develop strategies employing all of the elements of power. Students at the USAWC will develop and practice these skills in Course 2, the Regional Strategic Appraisals, Elective Courses, and the Strategic Crisis Exercise. Remember, the formulation of national security strategy, as it does at any level of strategy, employs the strategic thought process based on the use of Ends, Ways, and Means.

National Interests. At the national security strategic level, the United States moves beyond the three core grand strategic interests to more specific national security interests derived from those core interests in accordance with national policy. These national security interests provide more detail to the nation's needs and aspirations, in terms of the relationship between the foreign and domestic aspects of national security, and are thus the start point for defining national security strategic objectives.

1. **Description:** 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 “protect sources of raw materials”).
- b. Unrestricted passage through international waters — (Not “secure sea lines of communications”).

2. **Categories:** The Army War College groups national interests into three categories derived from the three core interests of the United States. Categories help to organize interests. 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 United States and its allies, it also ties into the other two categories of national interests used by the USAWC. The three categories are:

- a. SECURITY OF THE HOMELAND: 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 WELL-BEING: attainment of the conditions in the world environment that ensure the economic well-being of the nation.
- c. PROMOTION OF VALUES: establishment of the legitimacy of or expansion of the fundamental values of the nation such as democracy and human rights.

3. **Intensity:** Determining the level of intensity helps 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. 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. 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 consequences 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.

National Security Strategic Ends-Ways-Means:

1. U.S. National Security Strategic Objectives are derived from national policy concerning America’s grand strategic role in the world and from a detailed consideration of U.S. national security interests by category and intensity against the backdrop at the national level of issues, trends, and challenges (threats and opportunities) that affect those interests. Based on these objectives, the national government considers alternative concepts and courses of action offered by executive branch departments for the use of the national elements of power.

2. Various agencies of the government contribute to the national security 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.

Risk Assessment: Strategies at any level normally lack resources sufficient for complete assurance of success. The U.S. National Security Strategy is no exception. As a result, a final and essential test is to assess the risk of less than full attainment of national security strategic objectives. Living with risk is part of the strategist’s business in the modern world, and being able to articulate its character and extent is the first step in reducing its impact. Where the risk is determined to be unacceptable, the strategy must be revised by individually or in combination, reducing the objectives, changing the concepts, or increasing the resources.

National Military Strategy.

Of special interest to USAWC students is the development of national military strategy. This section applies the strategy formulation guidelines to this issue. Recall, that 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.

1. Military Strategy = Objectives + Strategic Concepts + Resources

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

Military Objectives (Ends): The first crucial step, then, is translating applicable *national security objectives* and policy guidance into clear, concise, and achievable *military objectives*. Military objectives answer the question *what* is to be achieved by the military element of power. As a rule of thumb, military objectives should:

1. Be appropriate, explicit, finite, achievable, and, if necessitated by policy guidance, limited in scope. (Test this by asking yourself if, as a combatant commander, you would know exactly *what* you would be expected to accomplish by the national leadership.)
2. 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:

- a. Interest: access to raw materials
Objective: secure access to raw materials
- b. Interest: a region free of conflict
Objective: deter intra-regional conflict
- c. Interest: survival of Country X
Objective: defend Country X

3. 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.

Military Strategic Concepts (Ways): Strategic concepts are broad courses of action or *ways* military power might be employed to achieve the stated 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:

1. Each military objective must have one (or more) concept(s) detailing *how* means (resources) are to relate to ends (objectives).
2. Stated strategic concepts represent the preferred options of the possible courses of action considered.
3. Strategic concepts also detail when, where, phasing, sequencing, roles, priorities, etc., as appropriate.
4. Examples:
 - a. *Interest*: Access to Middle-East Oil
 - b. *Objective*: Secure SLOCs to the Middle-East
 - c. *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.

Military Resources (Means): Finally, the strategy must have resources—i.e., military forces and means implied by the objectives and concepts are 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:

1. Military resources must be identified for each objective and concept articulated.
2. Supportability of forces should be addressed (in terms of strategic lift, sustainability, host nation support, reinforcements, etc.).
3. For example:
 - a. One Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) with an embarked Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) will deploy to X ocean on a quarterly basis . . .
 - b. A permanent Joint Task Force (JTF) will be established toTwo CONU.S.-based Divisions, one Special Forces Group and two Tactical Fighter Wings, supported by . . . will be prepared to . . .
4. 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.

