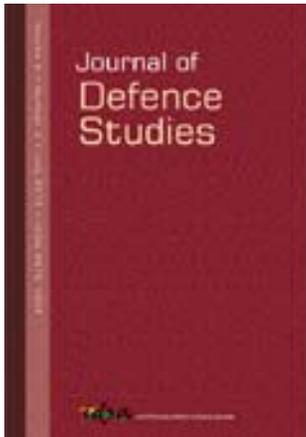


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### The Problem of Grand Strategy

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# The Problem of Grand Strategy<sup>1</sup>

*Krishnappa Venkatsamy\**

*This paper interrogates the concept of grand strategy. Its proponents argue that the absence of a publicly articulated and coherent grand strategy leads to incoherence in practice: armed forces acquire technologies without a strategy, government departments pursue their specific interests without reference to overarching national goals, and diplomats have a hard time explaining India's behaviour to foreign interlocutors. Despite its apparent desirability, the concept of grand strategy has come to mean different things to different thinkers depending on their vision of the world, their conceptions about the nature of power, their institutional affiliations, and the interests they seek to pursue. A proper understanding of grand strategy, therefore, is a first step towards its development. This paper presents multi-dimensional aspects of the concept and identifies its implications for practice.*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a growing demand in Indian policy-making circles for the articulation of a 'grand strategy' by the government.<sup>2</sup> It is widely believed that such formulation of grand strategy by the government will provide number of benefits: first, it will help concerned departments to develop their plans (short/medium/long-term) in accordance with the overall national intent. Second, it will help policy-makers view their particular policy initiatives holistically and highlight cross-cutting issues. Third, the strategy can provide a basis for prioritising resource allocations. Fourth, it will improve coordination among agencies, increase synergies and

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provide direction to individual and collective actions. Fifth, it can enhance communication and cooperation with other states. Sixth, it will encourage policy-makers to think systematically about the long-term consequences of their actions. Seventh, it will be useful to test the robustness of current organisational structures, processes and resources. Eighth, it will help citizens to evaluate whether particular actions of the state are aligned with the nation's core values and interests. Ninth, it will be useful to promote structured and focussed research on core issues and areas that are identified as national priorities. Finally, it would be useful for educating the strategic leadership.

While the usefulness of a grand strategy for a country like India would seem obvious from the above discussion, its formulation is neither easy nor without costs.<sup>3</sup> The first level of difficulty with formulating the grand strategy is conceptual.<sup>4</sup> The term has come to mean different things to different thinkers. The second barrier to public articulation of grand strategy is that it is not without risks; that is, there are risks attached to the benefits. Also, historically strategies often end up producing paradoxical outcomes.<sup>5</sup> The third barrier to making grand strategy is political contestation.<sup>6</sup> Public articulation of grand strategy may engender political contestation rather than fostering consensus as its proponents suggest. The last of the barriers to making grand strategy is the institutional locus. Grand strategy requires skills and competence at convening a wide-ranging dialogue and synthesis of insights gained in the process. In most cases, the states have weak institutions and are critically short on the analytical resources and traditions of fostering in genuine interdisciplinary dialogue.<sup>7</sup>

In the first part of this article I will discuss in detail the barriers to formulating grand strategy. In the second part, an enumeration of the areas of agreement among thinkers on the subject is detailed. In the third and concluding section, I will offer five steps for formulation of the strategy that can be applied to the Indian context.

In this article, I seek to demonstrate the complex nature of grand strategy, rather than attempting to settle conceptual problems or providing a comprehensive framework for doing strategy.

#### **BARRIERS TO FORMULATING OF GRAND STRATEGY**

##### **Lack of Conceptual Clarity**

The first barrier to the making of grand strategy is the absence of conceptual clarity. Grand strategy, like many other concepts in the political and social sciences, is an ambiguous concept.<sup>8</sup> It means different things to different

people depending on their vision of the world, their conceptions of the nature of power, their institutional affiliations, and the interests they seek to pursue. It may not even mean anything very precise to most using the term. We hold in our minds many concepts whose boundaries we have not consciously defined. Perhaps they cannot be *clearly* defined. Grand strategy is one such term that lacks a universally-accepted definition and shared meaning; however, this has not prevented its usage among academic and policy communities. In the absence of universally-accepted meaning, each person would develop his/her own image of grand strategy. The images of grand strategy range from a fully developed plan of action to subtler aspects such as visions and world views.

#### ***As a Plan***

According to the dominant view in most literature, grand strategy is viewed as a plan of action articulated by the nation's top leadership with the help of expert staff. In this idealised image, the national leadership assembles a group of experts to identify and prioritise long-term challenges to national security by scanning the internal and external environment and developing a repertoire of responses that would maximise opportunities and minimise risks. Such an expert group, mostly drawn from institutions such as the National Security Council (NSC), is expected to conduct wide ranging consultations with important stakeholders, both within the government and outside. After due deliberations, the strategic planners present a draft of the grand strategy to the political leadership (Prime Minister/Cabinet group) which then accords sanction.<sup>9</sup> Such a strategy document then forms the basis for departmental strategies across the government—military strategy, foreign policy strategy, economic strategy, etc.

Strategic planning in this scenario assumes the following:

- (a) A minimum degree of stability in the internal and external environment that allows for linear planning.
- (b) The environment can be objectively assessed.
- (c) It is possible to present a synthesis of various points of view in a manner acceptable to key stakeholders.
- (d) It is possible to communicate important assumptions behind the key judgements to all the stakeholders to enlist their support.

#### ***As a Vision***

The vision of the leader is another characteristic of grand strategy. A vision is a mental representation of strategy created in the mind of the leader.

A vision is expected to serve both as an inspiration and a sense of what needs to be done—something akin to a guiding idea. Unlike grand strategy as a plan, a vision leaves the details to be filled in by the stakeholders. This provides bureaucratic agents with lot more flexibility to adapt their actions to emergent circumstances. Strategy as a visionary process is most pronounced during the inception of states or during major national crises. Thus we designate Indian grand strategy between 1947–64 as ‘Nehruvian’. Similarly, the British grand strategy during the Second World War is associated with Churchill and the strategy of ‘Containment’ with Truman.

The vision of the national leader is a useful basis for the development of strategy in four important ways:

- (a) It articulates the view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the nation, a future that is better than the current situation in important ways.
- (b) It provides an important link between the present situation and the future trajectory of the nation.
- (c) While plans and strategies engage the stakeholders at a more analytical and rational level, an effective visionary leader will connect with his constituency—the citizens—at a deep emotional level. The vision of the leader thus acts as glue that binds together various elements of the national system, proving a basis for building national consensus on the details of the deliberate strategies. This is especially useful in times of great crises requiring painful sacrifices among the people (e.g., war), or in situations involving significant conflict of interests between the sections of a society (e.g., India’s struggle for independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi).
- (d) Unlike plans that emerge out of analytical processes—which seeks to add up the parts to make the whole—visions transcend facts, competing interests and forecasts, presenting a unified, synthetic and attractive view of the future.

The image of grand strategy as the vision of a great leader, however, captures one part of the strategy process and not its entirety. Its usefulness depends on the quality of the vision and the leadership, credibility of the latter and various other contingent factors. Even during the best of the times, a visionary approach should be supplemented (not substituted) by institutional competence for making grand strategy. Strategy formation needs more than vision, especially in complex institutional contexts of the modern state system.

### ***As Politics***

While the previous two characteristics of strategy are prescriptive, grand strategy formation as a political process seeks to describe how actual strategies are formed. According to this characteristic, grand strategies emerge out of bargaining and compromise among various stakeholders within the state. In an uncertain strategic environment, competing goals, varied perceptions about what constitutes reality, and scarcity of resources give rise to politics. The proponents of this viewpoint believe that it is not possible to formulate, let alone implement, optimal strategies. Competing interest groups and/or coalitions will ensure that any intended strategy is altered to suit their particular interests. States are constituted of political formations whose nature is to play political games. In a political system such as India's, there will always be some enduring differences among key stakeholders (bureaucracies, coalition partners, civil society groups and opposition parties) in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality. As a consequence of these enduring differences, conflicts emerge that would defeat the success of a neatly-formulated strategy by expert planners.<sup>10</sup> In this scenario, realised strategies will be different from the intended strategies as they emerge as a result of hard bargaining, negotiation and jockeying for position, rather than the rational calculations of a unified actor.<sup>11</sup>

### ***As a Paradigm***

Grand strategy imagined as a paradigm is a simplified version of reality, a general perspective of the world view widely shared among the elite. Academic Realism and Liberalism are two such paradigms that enfold in them a certain conception about the nature of the world. These simplified and parsimonious versions of reality provide a short-hand guide for interpreting specific events and developments without reference to first principles. Paradigms tell us what is permissible, possible and legitimate. In this scenario, states, or the top leadership of a state, at any given time, have a dominant paradigm that constitutes their identity and guides their behaviour. Therefore, it can be assumed that it is 'Idealism' that arguably defined Nehru's grand strategy while 'Realism' framed Indira Gandhi's statecraft. According to some scholars, however, India's contemporary strategy is coded in the term 'pragmatic'.<sup>12</sup>

Paradigms are useful tools for appreciation of reality, but are not reality itself. They cannot be substituted for strategy-making which requires, at the minimum, peeping out of the paradigm box. Grand strategies could

never be purely Realist, Liberal, Isolationist, Non-aligned or Expansionist. Caricaturing the grand strategy of the Nehru era as 'Non-alignment', as some tend to do, does no justice to the complexity of India's statecraft during that critical phase of Indian history. Similarly, contemporary India's grand strategy cannot be folded meaningfully in to any one paradigm. It is neither Realist, Idealist nor pragmatic. A nation's foreign or security policies are more complicated than what these labels suggest. In some circumstances, paradigms may provide a useful short-hand for complex reality, but if the assumptions behind the particular paradigm are not surfaced and validated in light of current realities, there is risk of holding on to an outdated map like the ideologues of this or that '-ism' do.

#### ***As Strategic Culture***

This image of strategy holds that strategy is essentially ideational. Nations that have established traditions of thinking about the use of force in the international system are better at strategy-making than others. A state's strategic competence is judged not by material achievements of the state but by the quality of its thought, presented and preserved in the written form. Adherents of this image of strategy believe India lacks strategic culture and as corollary, strategic competence.<sup>13</sup> This image over-emphasises the role of verbally articulated ideas and under-plays culturally derived transmissions of useful norms in non-verbal forms. It also underestimates tacit dimensions of knowing and doing. Nations are moved both by word, and more importantly, by deeds committed by the agents who may not find it necessary or useful to articulate what they are doing. The quality of concentricity of national thought tells us very little about a nation's overall strategic competence. In any case, grand strategy is more than utility of force in the international system.

#### ***As Harmonisation of Ends and Means***

Grand strategy in this scenario is neither identification nor prioritisation of national objectives, nor is it simply about the methodology of achieving these. Instead, it is about harmonising ends and means. The strategic process is all about ensuring that ends do not over-step available means, and resources are not wasted, with the former leading to failure of strategy and the later involving opportunity costs.

Marrying ends and means is not a value neutral process, as the Realist school of strategy would want us to believe. What objectives are legitimate and what means are allowed is informed by the beliefs and values of the

strategists and citizens in a democratic polity. This explains, for example, why certain types of interrogation techniques are seen as legitimate in some countries and disallowed in others. Besides values and beliefs, the process of harmonising should take into account the long-term and wider consequences. For example, state A is in conflict with state B; A, however, believes that in the foreseeable future the conflict will be transformed to peaceful co-existence. The means that A will use in the conflict will be conditioned by this optimism. Similarly, in contexts where certain coercive means are seen as operationally expedient—but may lead to harmful or uncertain wider consequences—the state may restrain use of such means.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that matching the ends and means involves more optimal employment of national resources placing a premium on ethical and political judgement.

### ***As a Pattern***

The conception of grand strategy as a pattern is popular among political scientists and historians. In this view, you look back to look ahead. If you want to know how a state might behave under certain conditions, go back in history to find the consistency in its behaviour. This pattern-making is seen as both useful in explaining past behaviour and providing clues to future strategies, and reveals something about the inner workings about the state itself. All of this, it is believed, will help strategists to formulate wise strategies. This describes realised strategies rather than prescribing forward-looking strategies.

The above discussion reveals the limits of any singular conception of grand strategy. Each of these various characteristics/scenarios touches upon some aspect of grand strategy revealing its parts rather than the whole, somewhat like the proverbial blind men and the elephant. A unified concept of grand strategy thus remains elusive.

### **The Benefits?**

The second barrier to formulation of grand strategy is that it is not obvious that benefits are greater than the risks. We will briefly examine both the benefits and the risks in this section.

- (a) *Grand strategy is necessary to set direction:* The political leadership should articulate a clear set of goals to set the nation on the right course in a turbulent internal and external environment.  
*Risk:* This is a self-contradictory objective if we agree that the strategic environment is turbulent. How can opportunities and

risks be pre-determined when the environment is not sufficiently stable? Is it not better to move carefully and in small steps, especially when your horizons are not clear? Moving in a pre-determined direction may be a prescription for running into icebergs.

- (b) *Grand strategy will focus effort:* Grand strategy is useful in promoting coordination among agencies within the government and the larger society. Without an explicitly-articulated national strategy, departments will pull in different directions diminishing the chances of success.

*Risk:* Efforts to tightly regulate the behaviour of agencies may well produce contradictory outcomes in terms of groupthink and premature closure of mind. This may diminish our capacity for peripheral vision so necessary for maximising the emerging opportunities.

- (c) *Grand strategy provides consistency:* Grand strategy is required to reduce ambiguity and provide consistency. It provides a cognitive structure to explain the world, make it intelligible and thus facilitate action.

*Risk:* Strategic action is about thriving in the domain of ambiguity and inconsistency. It is about finding new combinations of disparate elements. It involves novel, unstructured, non-routine and non-repetitive elements. Grand strategy, like theories in social and political sciences, are images of reality held in the minds of the actors. This means it simplifies the reality representing only a part of this image.

- (d) *Grand strategy is necessary to define identity:* Grand strategy will define the state, differentiating it from the rest. It will make it easier for others to understand us better without having to study a state's history, political system or culture. It increases our collective capacity for shared meaning.

*Risk:* To define a state too narrowly will mean defining it too simply. In the extremes, this may lead to stereotypes that might obscure rich complexity and raise the barriers to better understanding.

- (e) *Grand strategy will be useful in building national consensus:* If the government publishes its grand strategy, elites could swing into action to build national consensus around important elements. A large number of analysts indeed see this as a principle benefit of a grand strategy document.

*Risk:* In a politically fraught public space, government strategy may

increase the risk of further divisions and lead to adverse impacts on the achievement of concrete outcomes.

### **Elusive Political Consensus**

A grand strategy is at the core a political project. Politics by definition is a contested domain. Grand strategy to be meaningful should articulate how the government of the day like to manage the economic, political, social and security policies in the long-term perspective. However, political parties can be parochial and have short-term horizons. This is true of any democracy, but truer in the case of contemporary India.

Experts may develop the best designs but it is the judgments of the political leadership that will count in the end. To be made explicit, grand strategy would require a minimum degree of consensus on issues of consequence. In the Indian case, consensus is absent among the political stakeholders on critical questions of national significance. For example: what should be the nature of our relations with other key states such as the United States and Russia? What should be our strategy towards Pakistan and China? How should we settle our border disputes with Bangladesh? Importantly, should we aspire to be a great power? On these and other issues, our key political formations have divergent views that are not easy to bridge. A grand strategy that articulates a particular approach on any of these issues will be politically contested, leading to distractions on the government's attention and, as a consequence, the government may even be forced to retract objectionable aspects in the strategy. This may have unintended harmful consequences for the conduct of India's diplomacy and foreign relations. It may even force the government to be more cautious and passive in its approach to contentious issues. Instead of facilitating consensus, it could lead to more fragmentation once the lines are drawn and defended in the public domain.

There is no consensus on what constitutes India's core interests and how to promote them. We all agree on the need to protect our national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty. But we do not always agree on the means and methods. For example, what should be our response to acts of terrorism emanating from Pakistani soil? Will India be better served in the long term by exercising restraint as it has done in the past? Would it be better to initiate punitive actions to compel the state of Pakistan to take steps to prevent use of its territory for such acts? The house is divided. More recent public debates include the government-appointed interlocutors' report on Jammu and Kashmir or the question of the Armed

Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Interests and value systems of political parties, government institutions and civil society groups clash on all these issues.

India's national security and national well-being will depend most significantly on our economic growth and economic well being of our citizens. We all agree that the economy should grow but not necessarily on the means to promote that growth. Our political parties are divided on small and big issues that have a bearing on economic evolution. Take, for example, the recent case of allowing enhanced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail. A grand strategy that does not present the government's considered view on how to promote economic well-being of our nation will be without meaningful content; if the government chooses to articulate this, it could risk political contention and distraction.

More consequentially, collective well-being and security will depend on social cohesion. We know that our political parties are divided on how best to foster it. The contentious debate on the sub-quota for the minorities is one example of how divided we are on issues of fundamental significance to our long-term security and well-being.

### **Who Owns Strategy-making?**

Another barrier to making of the grand strategy is the absence of institutional arrangements that are resourceful, competent and legitimate. In a democratic context, making of grand strategy cannot be the preserve of official experts alone. If the process is not mediated by the political institutions, it will not be seen as legitimate. Also, at the minimum, it will demand long drawn out consultations with stakeholders within and outside of the government. The host institution should have the competence to foster wide ranging dialogues, record different points of view, and present the synthesis for the approval of the political leadership. Government institutions, to an extent, lack supportive organisational culture, capacity or competence to undertake this task.

Besides the government, making grand strategy will require system wide competence for interdisciplinary studies. Our think tanks and the university system have to show more interest in setting up projects that promote interdisciplinary dialogues. Think tanks and universities tend to be divided into neat silos and oriented towards specialisation. Asking big questions that are consequential to our national well-being needs to be further encouraged in our intellectual culture. At present, most of our intellectual activities are directed at 'here and now' issues, leaving little

space for forward-looking studies. These institutional and intellectual deficits constrain our collective capacities for long-term thinking, let alone making of grand strategy.

#### **EIGHT AREAS OF AGREEMENT**

As is evident from the above discussion, grand strategy lacks agreed definition and involves a complex process. Despite its multiple interpretations, the essence of grand strategy could be found in the eight areas of agreement among thinkers.

- (a) Grand strategy encompasses both internal and external dimensions of the nation: Unlike the foreign policy or military strategy, grand strategy thinking recognises the inseparability of internal and external dimensions. It encompasses the whole of internal and external policy. For grand strategy to be meaningful it should provide a framework for integrating the entirety of a state's purposes and resources.
- (b) Subject matter of Grand strategy is complex: Grand strategy deals with the complex set of interactions between elements in the external and internal environments whose outcomes are difficult to anticipate in advance. Grand strategy is in many ways a framework for management of change involving both adaptation to changes and fostering change to serve the national purposes. It is also an arena of interdependent choice-making, involving a number of actors whose responses to particular actions cannot be anticipated with certainty in advance.
- (c) Grand strategy involves both the content and the process: A grand strategy to be useful should contain both what should be done and how it should be achieved. Grand strategy formulation involves both identifying the goals, process and the institutional responsibilities.
- (d) Grand strategy involves both an analysis and synthesis: Grand strategy involves analysis of trends and drivers in specific domains of national and external environment. Analysis provides expert inputs for the formulation of grand strategy. But the grand strategy formulation has to transcend the domains and offer a synthetic perspective. It is a coherent framework linking the past with the future, internal with the external, opportunities with risks, interests with values, means with ends, etc. Grand strategy, like the real world, is interdisciplinary.

- (e) Grand strategy provides for both control and experimentation: A balanced grand strategy should be premised on irreducible uncertainty in the strategic environment and as a corollary, the imperative of adaptive behaviour by various stakeholders in the system. Surprises are inevitable in the strategic domain.<sup>15</sup> The world is witnessing exponential changes in the technological domain that will have an important bearing on the political, social, and environmental and security domains. Grand strategic framework, seeking to regulate national conduct, should encourage learning and adaptation to changing environments.
- (f) Grand strategy is both instrumental and value laden: Nation states do not exist or conduct their statecraft in a moral vacuum. Their perspectives and actions are conditioned as much by their moral codes, emotions and other non-rational elements. A grand strategy that does not take into account these non-instrumental dimensions is unlikely to gain the support of its citizens, nor will it provide for a conducive framework for enhancing cooperation in the international arena. For a grand strategy to be successful it should integrate both the interests and the values of the key stakeholders.
- (g) Grand strategy is essentially a political project: Grand strategy is about states. States are political projects. Grand strategy is a result of competing interests and values among the political elite of the nation. Therefore, there is no grand strategy in the pure rational goal-seeking sense. The existence of pure interests that are obvious to everyone is more a myth, not reality. National leadership that that doesn't seek to reconcile the interests of key stakeholders will set itself for failure. Grand strategies succeed or fail to the extent the leadership co-opts key political actors.
- (h) Absence of deliberate grand strategy does not mean that the state is less successful in practice: Although a number of major states in the international system periodically articulate their grand strategies, it is not certain if it is a necessary condition for national success. Historical experience suggests that realised outcomes are often far removed from what was intended. The gap between what was intended in America's National Security Strategy of 2002 and the outcomes it produced is just one recent instance of this phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> Something similar could be said about Eisenhower's much-fabled NSC-68.<sup>17</sup>

States are complex organisms located in dynamically evolving environments that cheat the best of minds and do not often respect the will of the most powerful. States often develop a range of repertoires by trial and error enabling their survival and well-being. The most useful knowledge is distributed across the system, empowering individual agents to adapt and innovate. The sum of these micro-actions matter far more for national success than a document sanctioned by the leadership. Articulated strategy is useful to the extent it captures this reality and gives verbal expression to the government's view of what causes security and well-being. A grand strategy is still an image of reality, not the reality itself. Absence of this image is not absence of strategic action.

#### CONCLUSION: WAY FORWARD<sup>18</sup>

Following upon the proceeding discussion, this section offers framework for understanding process of making grand strategy. Grand strategy involves five elements:

- (a) The why's of grand strategy involves identifying the need for the government to take strategic initiative. The first step of a grand strategy-making process is asking why it has become necessary to identify and prioritise the critical interests of the state that would require strategic intervention by the national leadership.
- (b) The second element involves identification of the context in which the actions are being proposed. The grand strategy should seek to be good fit with strategic environment. Achieving the right fit requires identification of the 'fields of action' that the national leadership is seeking to influence. There are four types of strategic environments—direct causation, multiple variables, complex fields and chaos.<sup>19</sup> Direct Causation is a field in which there is direct causal link between the cause and the effect. The routine of work of the bureaucracies falls into this environment type. In this kind of environment, predicting the outcomes of specific action is possible. In the fields of multiple variables, cause and effect is not directly correlated and as a consequence this kind of environment cannot be modelled. Complex fields involves even less understood phenomenon, such as the national cultures, operational codes of leadership in a foreign state. Finally, chaos: this is a field most pronounce 'during periods of crisis and transition' when the established 'rules and relations break down'.<sup>20</sup>

- (c) The next step is to understand the relationship between ‘power and knowledge the government can bring to an issue or the task.’<sup>21</sup>
- (d) The fourth dimension of strategy-making involves how to achieve specified objectives. There are multiple methods and means to achieve any particular strategic objective of the state. This step involves identifying the right tools to minimize costs and maximize positive outcomes.
- (e) The last element critical to the success of grand strategy is identification of feedback loops that will help keep the strategy adaptive. Irrespective of states’ capacity for anticipating the future and building strategies based on the insights from the past, history suggests that strategies will be modified in the light of experience. It is critical that states develop institutional capacities for multiple feedbacks and adaptation in light of experience in implementing the strategy.

#### NOTES

1. Most Indian commentators prefer using the term ‘national security strategy’ instead of ‘grand strategy’. I use the term ‘grand strategy’ because it is widely used term in the strategic studies and international relations literature. For example, see Paul Kennedy (ed.), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991; Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (ed.), *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993; Kevin Narizny, *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007; Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005; Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
2. See Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming without Aiming: India’s Military Modernisation*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010, p. 28.
3. A good comparative analysis would be that of the American experience in making grand strategy. For detailed analysis see, Andrew F. Krepinevich and Barry D. Watts, *Regaining Strategic Competence*, Washington DC: Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009, available at [www.csbaonline.org](http://www.csbaonline.org), accessed on 14 December 2009; David Rothkopf, *Running the World: The Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*, New York: Public Affairs, 2005; Walter A. McDougall, ‘Can the United States Do Grand Strategy?’, *Orbis*, Spring 2010, pp. 165–84. For a comparative analysis of the British experience see *Who Does UK National Strategy? First Report of Session 2010–11*, House of Commons Public Administration Committee,

- 20 October 2010, available at [www.parliament.uk/business/committees/.../uk-grand-strategy/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/.../uk-grand-strategy/), accessed on 3 April 2012; and *Who Does UK Grand Strategy?*, *Written Evidence*, House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee, 20 October 2010, available at [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmpubadm/memo/grandstrat/gso1.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmpubadm/memo/grandstrat/gso1.htm), accessed on 3 April 2012. For a thoughtful discussion on the barriers to strategy-making, see Richard K. Betts, 'Is Strategy an Illusion?', *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Fall 2000, pp. 5–50.
4. For a discussion on absence of shared meaning as a consequence of over-use of the term strategy, see Hew Strachan, 'The Lost Meaning of Strategy', *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Autumn 2005, pp. 33–54. See also the number of submissions to the *Who Does UK National Strategy? First Report of Session 2010–11*, House of Commons Public Administration Committee, 20 October 2010, available at [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmpubadm/435/435.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmpubadm/435/435.pdf), accessed on 16 April 2012.
  5. There are many instances of grand strategic successes ending up producing paradoxical outcomes. Most recently, George W. Bush sought to assert American pre-eminence through a pre-emptive war in Iraq; paradoxically, it resulted in diminishing American influence in the world. The dramatic success of Israel in 1967 War, many argue, is the cause of much of its strategic troubles today. The grand strategy of the Allies to keep Germany down in the aftermath of the First World War is believed to have led to the very opposite outcome with disastrous consequences. For a fuller exposition of paradoxical logic of strategy, see Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001, pp. 3–86.
  6. See Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998; Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993; Jack Snyder, *Myth of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993; Mark L. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics 1789–1989*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.
  7. For an historical account of the American experience of institution-building for grand strategy, see Rothkopf, *Running the World*. Also see Gwyn Prins, 'The British Way of Strategy-making: Vital Lessons for Our Times', Rusi Occasional Paper, October 2011, available at [http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/The\\_British\\_Way\\_of\\_Strategy\\_Making.pdf](http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/The_British_Way_of_Strategy_Making.pdf), accessed on 16 May 2012.
  8. In this sense, grand strategy is akin to the concept of national security. See Arnold Wolfers, "'National Security" as an Ambiguous Symbol', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 1952, pp. 481–502; Gregory D. Foster, 'A Conceptual Foundation for a Theory of Strategy', *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1990, pp. 29–42. For a brief history of the concept, see Peter

- Layton, 'The Idea of Grand Strategy', Rusi Conference Paper 27, October 2011, available at [http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Group\\_Captain\\_Peter\\_Layton\\_RAAF.pdf](http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Group_Captain_Peter_Layton_RAAF.pdf), accessed on 30 March 2012.
9. For a description of American national security strategy making process which is made in the image of a plan see Rothkopf, *Running the World*, n. 3.
  10. America's strategy during the Vietnam conflict is a classic example of how plans and realities of the domestic arena interact to create outcomes that are far from intended.
  11. For a classic account of bureaucratic politics and strategic outcomes, see Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, New York: Longman, 1999.
  12. Ollapally, Deepa and Rajesh Rajagopalan, 'The Pragmatic Challenge to India's Foreign Policy', *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2011, pp. 145–62.
  13. See George K. Tanham, 'India's Strategic Thought: An Interpretative Essay', Santa Monica: RAND Publishing, 1992, available at [www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2007/R4207.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2007/R4207.pdf), accessed on 9 January 2005; K. Subrahmanyam, *Shedding the Shibboleths: India's Evolving Strategic Outlook*, New Delhi: Wordsmiths, 2005.
  14. For example, the Indian approach to use of air power in counter-insurgency operations.
  15. See Peter Schwartz, *Inevitable Surprises: A Survival Guide for the 21st Century*, London: Simon and Schuster, 2003, pp. 1–18.
  16. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, available at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/>, accessed on 7 May 2012.
  17. For a critical reflections of many of the participants in the framing of NSC-68, see Ernest R. May, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*, Boston: Bedford Books, 1993; John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Revised and expanded version), New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 87–124. For an insightful examination of Cold War strategies of the US and the erstwhile Soviet Union, see Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of the Mankind: The United State, the Soviet Union and the Cold War*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.
  18. This section draws upon the work of British public policy expert and strategy advisor to government, Geoff Mulgan. See Geoff Mulgan, *The Art of Public Strategy: Mobilizing Power and Knowledge for the Common Good*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 75–114.
  19. Mulgan, *The Art of Public Strategy*, p. 79.
  20. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.
  21. *Ibid.*, pp. 80.