

GRAND STRATEGIC APPROACH: A PERSPECTIVE

PRATEEK KAPIL

Ever since the birth of the modern Indian nation, policymaking has been compartmentalized into distinct fragments of analysis and implementation. National Security, Foreign Policy, Economic Growth, Internal Security, Social Stability, Governance, Human security, Military affairs etc. are studied just as in most modern nation-states of the world, as highly specialised and distinct issue areas requiring highly quarantined and focussed attention. Generalist approaches are treated as regressive and specialisation is of paramount importance to innovate creative solutions for the unique and persistent problems cropping up in these issue areas. While it would be foolhardy for me to criticize this progressive impetus towards specialisation which is critical to success in competitive and complex issue areas like national security and foreign Policy, the question still beckons whether we are keeping track of how all these tools of national policy are contributing to the overall Indian national project. Thinking ecologically about national security and foreign policy as part of the larger national progress in the international and domestic military-politico-economic environment is thus the primary objective of this paper. This is the quintessential feature of thinking in terms of grand strategy. Acknowledging linkages, interdependence, interactions, synergies, exclusivities and externalities are fundamental to strategizing by the Grand strategic approach. In short, Grand Strategy is defined as a

Prateek Kapil is a Research Associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi.

We do not have an Indian version of the US Goldwater-Nichols act which would spell out the legal imperatives of articulating a Grand Strategy document by the heads of the government

strategy employing all tools available to a nation in achieving defined national goals.

While this interdependence and interdisciplinary interaction is often acknowledged by proponents and leadership alike, there is no institutionalized effort to articulate an Indian Grand Strategy. We do not have an Indian version of the US Goldwater-Nichols act which would spell out the legal imperatives of articulating a Grand Strategy document by the heads of the government for e.g. The NSS (National Security

Strategy) document. On the contrary, strategists like Ashley Tellis¹ would argue, that non-articulation is itself a useful and deliberate strategy. They insist that India has always had a grand strategy which is often reflected in the continuities in the various policy statements and consequent policies but articulation per se is a complex and consequential exercise. While it is fair to say Grand strategic documents cannot be produced overnight, a sense of political direction is critical to this process and the leadership cannot abjure itself of that responsibility. There is a need to set a similar agenda for the strategic dialogue in India. Ad hoc policymaking is detrimental and strategic thinking needs to be invested in grand strategic goals and means. The NSA had recently commented that for a civilisation and a state like India not to have a strategic culture is impossible. He further elaborated that a set of shared beliefs, assumptions and modes of behaviour, derived from common experience and accepted narratives (both oral and written) that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives. Grand strategy is an identifiable set of basic assumptions about the nature of international and military issues from which operational policy flows².

1. Ashley Tellis, "Non-Alignment Redux, The Perils of old Wine in new Skins", *carnegieendowment.org*, July 2012. Available at: carnegieendowment.org/2012/07/10/nonalignment-redux-perils-of-old-wine-in-new-skin/co13 accessed on 16 Oct 12.
2. Talk delivered by Mr. Shiv Shankar Menon, NSA, Govt. of India, 'P.C. Lal memorial Lecture', April 2, 2012, organised by Air force association, cited in journal *Defence and Diplomacy*, vol. 1, no.3, April-June 2012.

Why do we need Grand strategy? We need it because it is the art of reconciling ends and means. It involves purposive action-what leaders think and want. Such action is constrained by factors leaders explicitly recognize (budgets and technology) or implicit ones like cultural or cognitive screens. It is an excellent way to bridge theory and practice. Grand Strategy begins with theory: leaders' perception about the working of the international system and role of their own state. Simultaneously it is codified in policymaking. Grand strategy may be born in the abstract or tangible debates at the higher echelons of power, but it is tested in the collective action of junior officials.

Grand strategy blends the disciplines of history (what happened and why?), political science (what underlying patterns and causal mechanisms are at work?)

Grand strategy lends itself to vigorous interpretive academic debates, yet it is so realistic that practitioners, current and former, can and must contribute for it to be properly understood. It leads to constructively critical appraisals of leaders. Grand strategy blends the disciplines of history (what happened and why?), political science (what underlying patterns and causal mechanisms are at work?), public policy (how well did it work and how could it be done better?), and economics (how are national resources produced and protected?). Grand strategy is useful because it makes history more relevant, political science more concrete, public policy more broadly contextualized, and economics more security-oriented.³

In the military context, Edward Luttwak describes the level of Grand Strategy as the level where the interactions of the lower, military levels yield results within the broad setting of international politics, in further interactions with the non-military relations of the state: the formal exchanges of diplomacy, the public communications of propaganda, secret operations, the perception of others formed by intelligence, and all economic transactions of more than purely private significance. On this

3. Peter Feaver, "What is grand strategy and why do we need it?", *foreignpolicy.com*, Shadow Government Blog, April 8th, 2009. Available at shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/08/what_is_grand_strategy_and_why_do_we_need_it?wp_login_redirect=0.

level, the net outcome of the technical, tactical, operational, and theater-strategic emerges in continuous interaction with all those dealings between states that are affected by, and in turn affect, what is done or not done in the military sphere within any one state. Grand strategy thus becomes a confluence of the military interactions that flow up and down level by level, forming strategy's "vertical" dimension, with the varied external relations among states forming strategy's "horizontal" dimension.

The analogy that he invokes is that of a knife fight between two cut throats in an alley: their grunts and screams may be seen as forms of diplomacy and propaganda; one or the other may attempt to employ economic inducements, offering money to stop the fight; some intelligence and deception will be present as each tries to misdirect the other by feints. In this fight we can recognise a tactical level, formed by reciprocal thrusts and parries, and a technical level, in the qualities of their knives. Even the participants themselves recognise distinctions between the levels, because they may plead, threaten, and bargain with each other as they continue to fight. Thus, Grand strategy is present even on the smallest scale. One distinction between this analogy and application in actual international politics is that the entire institutional and political aspect that characterises the conduct of states is absent in the analogy and with it the permanent contradiction between linear-logical political arrangements and the paradoxical logic that rules conflict. In the real world, Each government has its own goals, if only implicit, and each therefore measures results differently so that the same outcome ,say the preservation of an unchanged status quo, may be deemed highly successful by one government and a crushing failure by another. Whether we imagine Grand strategy in static terms as an edifice or in dynamic terms as a sort of complicated fountain, grand strategy is the conclusive level, where all that happens in the vertical and horizontal dimensions finally comes together to determine outcomes. Brilliant victories at the technical, tactical, operational, or theatre strategic level, or for that matter diplomatic blunder, may have the opposite effect or even remain without consequence in the

confluence of grand strategy.⁴

It is often feared that declaring a grand strategy can often lead to rigid self-fulfilling prophecies which restrict flexibility and manoeuvre. The Cold war is a convincing retort to this point where articulating the grand strategy of containment helped American leaders resolve many equally persuasive choices. It was important for the actors involved in this case to know what and why they were doing what they were. Containment linked the broader goal of American pre-eminence in international system with incremental weakening of the Soviet Union employing domestic strategies of strengthening export led growth and hastening inherent weaknesses of centrally planned pricing and political authoritarianism. Militarily, Containment solved the dilemmas of command control structure of the NATO nuclear umbrella, the alliance structure of the West and the tools of warfare necessary to achieve those objectives. Conventional infantry warfare for territorial gains backed by superior artillery and bomber aircrafts were supplemented by deterrence theories based on signalling, intelligence and reconnaissance. 'Military objectives' now included straining the domestic economy of the adversary as demonstrated by the Strategic Defence Initiative. Thus Containment as a grand strategy successfully recognised and exploited 'all tools available to US to achieve desired national objectives'.

Clausewitzian dictum of war as continuation of politics by other means is another significant feature of any grand Strategy. Attaching political or even economic conditionalities to any military initiative is critical to furthering national interests in the short term and long term survivability of military strength. Force used should always be commensurate with the precise political objective which should be further scrutinised for its desirability. The Americans learnt this lesson in the Korean & the Vietnam War and India in Sri Lanka and more severely in 1962 where a distinct interpretation of the use of force by the political and military establishments led to avoidable failures for both countries respectively. The use of force in touch with Economic and Political imperatives and constraint is often more effective than overreach

4. Luttwak, Edward, Book, "*Strategy- The Logic of War and peace*", BelKnap Press of Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2001, pp. 209-211.

Grand strategy can be conceived in different ways. Some nations weave it around principal threats, others towards particular issue goals and others in terms of regional architecture

or apprehension that it often oscillates between. Leaders are well served by having a rough idea of their grand goals when employing tools of foreign policy and national security. It has to be cautioned that Grand strategy does not mean having a perfect strategy without failings. Concepts like 'national interest', offensive and defensive deterrence, balance of power, role of state, military superiority, Sustainable growth are often transient and ambiguous with a scope for nuances. But the real test of leadership lies in resolving precisely this or at least attempt to. In that sense, the real utility

of the grand strategic approach is to impart direction and coherence to policy making. In the process, the approach helps the leaders of a nation-state to engage in national introspection leading to greater bipartisan support and consensus on the aforementioned variables. It puts limits to the overreaching tendencies in great power politics and provides practical road maps for middle powers like India. In addition, the approach acknowledges the prerogative entitled to any leadership to declare, convince and practice the national vision of their choice with checks and balances consistent with domestic politics and the anarchic international system.

Grand strategy can be conceived in different ways. Some nations weave it around principal threats, others towards particular issue goals and others in terms of regional architecture. This is not to say that a comprehensive approach would not look at all these aspects together. It only means that in resolving equally persuasive choices, one has to be categorically prioritised over the others. I want to reemphasise the purpose of Grand strategy is to resolve deadlocks by underlining the criteria to distinguish between equally persuasive choices. It is action oriented rather than just analysis-oriented. Walter Russell Mead⁵ terms this as a choice between the lighthouse approach and the mirror state approach. In a lighthouse approach, the state is conceived

5. Mr. Walter Russell Mead, Lecture, "US Grand Strategy from- from theory to Practice", December 10th, 2009, John Hopkins University. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpI8TjIjPG4 (Official John Hopkins Youtube Channel) accessed on 12 Sep 12.

in the classic sense. The leadership conceives of a grand plan based on the leadership's convictions of the state's goals and direction - the security and foreign policy are derived from that plan. A state with its best and the brightest in leadership is thus imagined as emitting a beam of light for the nation to follow. A mirror state strategy is analogous to a brawl on the ship deck as to which direction the ship should move. This state tries to reflect the various interests and contradictions in the society. There is no grand strategy as an intellectual construct in the abstract sense. The ship moves in the direction of the larger majority. The grand strategy emerges from the course of history and the various patterns that the history throws. To strategise for a mirror state is to look for patterns that have emerged in the political and military history of a nation. The United States is seen as one of these states. However, it is open to scrutiny as to which approach is suitable for nations as diverse as Germany, India, Brazil, Russia or China.

Indian Grand Strategy is premised on the fact that unlike China, India's emergence does not cause concern as India embraced an open industrial economy after becoming a democratic republic

Every State needs to strategise uniquely. Indian Grand Strategy is premised on the fact that unlike China, India's emergence does not cause concern as India embraced an open industrial economy after becoming a democratic republic. Yet it has to be said that India is a big power but it is not a continental power like China or Germany. It is a swing state like pre first world war France but only a systemic/fundamental change can bring it closer with its continental adversary just as the cold war brought Germany-France after centuries of intense rivalry. Britain was the principal offshore balancer in Metternich and Bismarck-Era Europe stabilising the intense rivalries between powers on the continent of Europe. In present day, US plays that role in Europe and East Asia. The principal Asian continental power of 21st century is China. Russia and Germany have the same potential in Europe but Germany has been tied to a stable alliance system (EU and NATO regimes) laden with common values and security interests and Russia is still rebuilding while restraining its focus on the periphery of central Asia

and Eastern Europe. In the long run, Russia is the Eurasian swing state whose choice of focus eastward or westward will depend on the pattern of Chinese Ascent and consequent behaviour. The Asian continent on the other hand, is far from the institutionalisation of the peace dividend which the two world wars forced western powers to adopt. Asian powers are still developing and the balance of power system is still evolving in the region. There are fewer common values and hence no offset for competing interests. States like Brazil and South Africa are influential outside actors in the Grand Eurasian strategy as long as the western hemisphere is primarily controlled by American powers and African neutrality is maintained which can be reasonably assumed in the near future. They have issue specific Grand Strategies primarily based on a fair international economic regime and safeguards of international public goods. Similar grand strategies might take shape in other middle powers like Argentina, Nigeria, Australia, Scandinavian and Benelux countries. Big powers on the other hand will look for preponderance rather than shared responsibility and cooperation. The world has flattened but the balance of power system among sovereign states is far from irrelevant because sovereignty and nationalism have not eroded in the face of globalising forces. In some cases, they have accentuated that trend. The probability of overt conflict has reduced due to presence of nuclear deterrence and economic interdependence but myriad non-traditional forms of conflict persist. For e.g. China's lowering of currency value and investment in US Government treasury bonds makes the dollar vulnerable to deliberate dumping should China choose to exercise that option in the larger Grand strategy of forsaking short-term losses in favour of long term damage to Dollar's international status. US on the other hand, is looking to continuously diversify its economy to high end manufacturing to maintain its strategic advantage over China and exploit recent Chinese vulnerabilities due to aging population and rising labour costs. India in this scenario will look to provide an alternative similar to other Asian powers while looking to balance Sino-Chinese Trade in its favour simultaneously hedging against political confrontation with the great neighbour. The grand strategy of the nation thus will ultimately depend on these different factors that their respective leaders have to resolve.

INDIAN DIMENSION

Indian Grand Strategy has never been articulated in a landmark official document or a policy statement. It has not manifested in itself in the pursuit and implementation of a particular force structure militarily. It has not been personality driven barring the omnipresence of few principles institutionalised by the first Prime Minister. The primary goal of Indian Grand strategy so far has been merely the preservation of its own exceptional values like Democracy, Secularism, Welfare market economy, Autonomy and Restraint. This is in part due to the still-emerging status of India's military and economic power. Indian Grand Strategy has been mostly a corollary of the Grand Strategies of Big powers like the US, erstwhile Soviet Union and 21st Century China. It has been reactive of their strategies. Although partially successful, such ad-hoc policy making is not necessarily the best way forward. India has 'restrained' from systematically defining and pursuing National Goals. It has been pragmatic enough to engage in balance of power politics as shown by the nuclear tests and the five border wars since independence but has been shy of insisting or exercising coercive power for national goals. The primary tool of Indian coercive power has been economic so far. But that has also blunted under attacks concerning the slow pace of reforms. Short of envisioning a world view or Grand Strategy, India has not even been assertive in benefitting from the existing system. A simple case in point is how China has successfully exploited the liberal market economy and Global US engagements to transfer the burden of providing global public goods on the latter while proceeding with her own economics-without-conditions-strategy worldwide. She has followed Deng's 28-character and Sun Tzu's Shi strategy to the letter and has been reasonably successful in achieving her periodic goals. Militarily, China has tried to pursue a A2/AD strategy against the US in east Asia while exercising conventional and nuclear superiority over the neighbours. India needs to articulate a strategy of her own. What are India's goals? If security is the primary objective then what is India's limited war doctrines for China and for maintaining conventional superiority over Pakistan. However, if Security and Development are both central goals then are overt alliances more feasible and achievable alternative for security?

Indian Grand Strategy has to have a long term view of which potential partners can provide tangible support and which have larger capacity to sustain values India considers important in times of differences

Development on the other hand would require insistence on equitable trade and increased sourcing of high-end technologies. In a globalised world, it will require increased education funding, reduced deficit spending and increased investment from abroad. Allies and Adversaries should be judged on these necessities rather than a predisposition to history or a particular value. Can trust and intentions be chosen over capabilities and interests? Values are important shock-absorbers but they are not the catalysts in an anarchic international system. National interest and *Realpolitik* serve that purpose. On the other hand, if a leader chooses to invoke values as primary then he should strategise for the viability and feasibility of institutionalisation of those values domestically, regionally and globally. In addition he has to do it within a temporal dimension. UNSC reform, IMF and World bank voting structures, Enforcement mechanism of the UN, legality and implementation of the human rights charter, the weaknesses of collective security and collective action, nuclear disarmament, instances of moral hazard and agreement on public goods are some of the age-old problems in a value based international system. An Indian leader has to strategise for these. Indian grand strategy cannot perhaps look for preponderance in a world of US-China pre-eminence. But it should look for balancing the region and greater influence globally. In other cases, it should look to benefit from the system which it cannot influence directly. NPT, NSG and MTCR regimes are one such example. India needs to incentivise partnership and dis-incentivise adversaries in tangibles rather than rhetoric. Military, India needs a force structure and a sourcing strategy (procurement, maintenance and development). India needs to invest in asymmetric warfare technologies of Air and naval power to provide teeth to her defensive military strategies towards China. To counter terrorism, India needs efficient elint and sigint technologies without treading on civil liberties. Geo-politically, India needs a friendly south-Asia. Should India look for a free

trade area in South Asia and deprioritise reciprocity in the region? The Sino-Indian relationship has to be based on peaceful negotiation, mutual respect, communication and a fair balance of trade even if that means a larger share for China. An aggressive gesture should be responded in kind through various non-military punitive mechanisms as well. Posturing and signalling is very important in this

regard even if the punitive measures fall short of influencing the adversary. Indian Grand Strategy has to have a long term view of which potential partners can provide tangible support and which have larger capacity to sustain values India considers important in times of differences. The availability, diversity and urgency of these partnerships and the pace of India's own hard power will determine these outcomes. Does the recent western interest provide a strategic opportunity for India and what is the window outside which this opportunity might be lost?

The domestic dynamic is equally important for a Grand Strategy. No grand strategy can preclude domestic policies. Indian grand strategy has to be cognisant of factors like centre-state relations, liberal market economy, a social safety net, a people's army under civilian control, increased innovation and high-end manufacturing, simpler regulations, proportional representation and voting system, prioritisation of education, health and moderate policing mechanisms. India has adopted a liberal democracy and market economy. She is one of the few nations where democracy has preceded industrialisation and growth. This provides India with a unique set of challenges and advantages. The question of fundamental reform in core areas like infrastructure, electoral systems, governance, pensions, energy security, diversification and sustainability, technology driven access and inclusiveness are monumental tasks for the leadership. These have immense bearing on our foreign policy and national security. The delicate balance between minimal regulatory transparent governance and increasing the scope and role of private sector in all activities of the nation is one of the cornerstones of efficient implementation of any 21st century national strategy. A shift from

The domestic dynamic is equally important for a Grand Strategy. No grand strategy can preclude domestic policies

the traditional nanny state to a more facilitator role is an idea whose time has come in modern-nation states. The role of private sector in traditionally state-dominated public goods like national security, public education, tax reforms, infrastructure, energy and health has fundamentally changed. In many cases, they are drivers of innovations and creative thinking. The Indian state too would need to adjust to these new realities while still retaining the primary role in regulation, monopolistic and distributive functions. Indian military capacities have to be a force multiplier for achievement of the broader politico-economic goals. Role of military attache' in our diplomatic missions needs a rethink in this regard. On the other hand, the responsibility of the private sector in servicing the demands of national security has to be solely driven and led by the operational conditions of the armed forces. Thus this delicate balance between stakeholders requires certain broadly agreed principles for effective national action. India is a knowledge-driven economy so our Global partnerships will have to be chosen in light of their impact on our core strategic concerns- technology and capital for our defence and entrepreneurs, education and access for our citizens, markets and institutional representation for fair and balanced international trade, diversification of our energy profile and reduction of our potentially crippling dependence on energy imports, security of global public goods and increased mandate in political institutions of power e.g. the UNSC. These questions are a prerogative of the leadership and too complex for a simplistic prescription. But a broad articulation of the criteria, reasoning and policy that the leadership chooses to resolve these is indispensable for the organisational consistency and efficiency of any national initiative. A simple wrong step/tactic/policy is often the manifestation of a flawed Grand Strategy.

A nation while thinking of grand strategy has to differentiate between short-term tactics from the broader strategic goals. Strategy is about knowing where you want to get to with means at your disposal. An interesting analogy is that of a student taking martial arts lessons. He gets into the lessons to learn how to defend himself. During the course of the lessons however he forgets to connect the short term tactics to the long term strategy merely proceeding mechanically with what he is taught without

thinking as to what works for him. There is a clear mismatch in the sense that his learning of those tactics were not shaped by his strategic thought which was to learn to defend himself. This process essentially results in him becoming a competent wushu demonstrator of martial arts but an incompetent fighter. This is a common problem in international politics and military affairs. Tactics are used devoid of strategy. Their short term applicability masquerades their broader utility. A good way of avoiding this is by framing a grand strategic vision. This ensures screening your tactics with your strategic goals.

Let's invoke an example. China has declared a strategy of 'peaceful development'. For the foreseeable future this can be regarded as the grand strategy of China. For this strategy to work, China needs a peaceful periphery and increased interaction with the world economy to fulfil its goals of economic growth. For the fruition of this strategy, China has looked to avoid direct confrontation with the US in the pacific but looked to exercise enough spheres of influence in its neighbouring countries in the classic sense of Sun Tzu's strategy game of 'shi'. It has looked to enhance its neighbours' dependence on Chinese trade while increasingly investing the surplus in US government treasury bonds to increase interdependence. China has invested in military technologies but hasn't demonstrated excessive force even in sensitive areas like South China Sea and Tibet. China's tactics are currently in line with its broader strategy. It is waiting for a strategic opportunity in terms of a systemic shift or event in international politics after which it can choose to change or continue this grand strategy and tactics accordingly. Till then all her tactics will be governed by this broader 'peaceful development' stratagem. Tactics in violation of this strategy might weaken china's broader goals which are political stability and few more decades of uninterrupted double digit growth. This time of stability will also help the communist party to adequately adapt politically to the internal pressures and external opportunities of the new confident China that will emerge in a few decades time. China's selection of these tactics is an insurance against the unpredictability of intentions which China's adversaries cannot rely on since intentions can change. They need

Strategy, in both theory and practice, is permeated and shaped by three set of forces: Logistical, Psychological (particularly centring on the psychological aspects of command), and bureaucratic

reassurance to ease their security dilemmas. China is thus framing her tactics in line with the strategy she has envisaged.

MILITARY DIMENSION

Military strategy and its implications on force structure is another pillar of grand strategy. Some might even say it's the foundation. Traditional exponents of the subject have dealt with grand strategy as almost exclusively in Military terms. Others however treat it as one of the many important components. Either way it is central to a nation's grand strategy since security is an indispensable public good. Also since the state is still the primary unit of an international system with no governing authority to impose a social contract between nations, military power has become the underlying currency of international politics. The US naval war college has done extensive analysis on the subject and they have come up with some fundamentals of military strategy. The first is that strategy, in both theory and practice, is permeated and shaped by three set of forces: Logistical, Psychological (particularly centring on the psychological aspects of command), and bureaucratic. The second observation is more Clausewitzian which is that while application of strategic principles to particular situations is infinitely variable and at times subtle, the fundamentals of strategy are relatively few and simple. This means that it is feasible to create a concise but carefully structured statement of these fundamentals that can be drawn on as a conceptual aid, or template, to help craft strategic approaches as current strategic conditions mutate and fundamentally new situations arise.

Strategy⁶ is defined as the comprehensive direction of power to control situations and areas to attain broad objectives. There is a further analysis of this definition:

6. Scott A. Boorman, "Fundamentals Of Strategy : The Legacy of Henry Eccles, *Naval War College Review*, Spring 2009, Vol. 62, No.2, pp. 92-96, pp. 98-99, p.103.

- Comprehensive: Control of the external field of action, whose central focus is the adversary or adversaries (but may also be expanded to include allies and neutrals) and Control of the internal field of action, whose focus is the roots of power on which the strategist draws (e.g. political, public opinion, producer logistics, means of internal organisational control, industrial base and perhaps even extending to family and social network of a leader or commander).
- Direction: involves the standard sorts of 'she/he thinks I think she/he thinks' calculations widely associated with thinking strategically. It employs the use of both logistical calculations and active use of diplomatic skill.
- Power here has to be given a broad scope: military and civilian. In strategic environments where certain types of power are "off the table" at a given time, a basic challenge for strategists is developing intuition to identify when a particular type of power has changed from unusable to usable. The dynamics here, centring on qualitative change in a conflict situation, are frequently more psychological and at times bureaucratic than technical – with a concomitant potential for strategic surprise, such as when adversaries come from very different cultures. Schelling elaborates on this point by warning that sophistication can sometime suppress sound intuition which should be restored. In this definition of power the military strategist has to exercise control on political, economic, demographic and military factors.
- Objectives in the definition, refers to actual, not declared strategy. In a world where PR is an important function, it is easy for strategists to let their declared strategies edit their real goals due to psychological and bureaucratic forces. This is called goal displacement. Because quantification in high-level strategic matters commonly has limited

In strategic environments where certain types of power are "off the table" at a given time, a basic challenge for strategists is developing intuition to identify when a particular type of power has changed from unusable to usable

meaning or utility, as a practical matter the analysis of objectives should involve devising a hierarchy of qualitative goals conjoined with a timetable for their accomplishment.

Furthermore logistics exist to serve strategy never the other way around. Logistics analysis must always accompany the strategic imagination. The strategist needs to craft a strategy to be in harmony with the fundamental values of the larger collective (nation, party, faction or other) that the strategist serves. Such values may include that collective's concepts of victory and defeat, its affinity with certain weapons or tools of conflict, and its affinity with certain overall styles of conflict (e.g. short war versus protracted war, positional versus mobile versus guerrilla warfare.) Such analysis becomes of paramount importance to seize the strategic opportunity when the adversary's own action starts to veer away from his fundamental values. Liddell Hart termed this as the "the other side of the hill" – i.e. the situation of the adversary.

As mentioned earlier, Flexibility is often sought during this analysis. In some contexts, Strategy certainly demands decisive action or some extremely carefully reasoned form of irreversible commitment. Yet the fog of war, fluidity of long term situations and opaqueness of complex social structure and process beget strategic flexibility. The dictum goes like this: producing strategic flexibility requires many ingredients but inducing strategic inflexibility may need only one. In light of this analysis, Grand Strategy is interpreted as a special case where either (1) control is sought with a distinctively deep time horizon or (2) the search for such control has distinctively combinational aspects among diplomatic, psychological, economic and purely military matters.⁷

Carl Von Clausewitz was the pioneering military strategist working on grand strategy. He emphasised certain principles which have been ingrained in the theory of strategy. His work, 'On War' is a seminal classic. He emphasised that there is no such thing as absolute war. War should always have a political purpose. War is a method by which states interact with each other. It is the continuation of policy by other means. That is why the total defeat or national humiliation of Japan and Germany in the Second

7. Ibid.

World War would have been a mistake because there would be a resultant power vacuum. He postulates that violence is at the centre of war but states need not produce disproportionate violence but just enough to achieve the desired objective. The purpose of military operation is just to produce enough violence to make a psychological impact on the adversary to make him stop. In other words, there has to be proportionality. He emphasised the virtues of defence over offense reasoning that every offensive in time exhausts itself to a culminating point - 'a centre of gravity' after which minimal application of opposing force (not necessarily war) could destabilise it. A good example would be George Kennan's prognosis that a small push applied with carefully chosen means could reverse Stalin's momentum in the post-war world- this could have been achieved with no fighting or violence at all. This prognosis ultimately led to the use of Marshall Plan to buttress American gains in post-war Europe and East Asia without any violence at all. In reality, the objective was achieved with just the announcement speech of the Marshall plan showing the dependable consistency of the seminal Clausewitzian logic. Clausewitz went further and qualified military strategy into a more complex and variable interaction between what he termed as 'the trinity of purpose, hostility and chance.' These principles have been distilled into modern war doctrines. Where grand strategy weighs in this concept is that it articulates that larger politico-economic purpose to influence all three factors in the ultimate use, rejection and proportionality of force.

GRAND STRATEGY IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The insistence on military strategy is crucial to the grand strategic approach even though the likelihood of conflict has greatly diminished in the nuclear world order. This is because Military power is still the underlying currency of power as nation states are still the primary units of interaction. I say underlying because in my opinion, despite globalisation, non-traditional security threats, and economic interdependence having an enormous impact in the direction of diplomacy and multilateralism; nationalism, security and sovereignty remain deeply embedded. Hence the reliance on force is apparent. This is because Force is 'fungible'. It can be used in

a variety of tasks and purposes both military and non-military. In fact, even the phenomenon of humanitarian intervention and R2P essentially negatively reinforces the deep roots of sovereignty- the logic being that there is something to intervene against and thus the term 'intervention' itself accepts the pervasiveness of 'sovereignty'. Although the nature of power politics has transformed dramatically, national interest retains a priority over values and relative gains of interdependence. Following from this argument, the conception of the state-centric international system is still relevant and classical realism with an insistence on balance of power and national interest with limited coordination of values remains a reliable construct for international politics. A military strategist's job is to strategise the specifics in coordination with this broad construct.

It would be worthwhile to mention at this point that theory has limitations. It cannot plan for unfavourable contingencies and real-time changes, a grand strategy on the other hand is needed to fill this analytical gap, and it helps you interpret real-time events in light of your larger strategic goals and options. For example, discounting a UN resolution as reactionary might be a reflection of your theoretical bias however sound the assumptions but as a strategist you might have to embrace or ignore it depending on your larger strategic goals. For a third world country and its leadership, these goals and hence the ensuing reaction is completely different compared to a great power although the latter might still choose to support it to uphold a particular value which serves a particular national interest. Therefore, strategy gives u theoretical nuance (or theoretical inconsistency whatever your interlocutor may choose to call it) by linking it with predictive outcomes rather than descriptive analysis.

There is another contemporary aspect in exercise and articulation of Grand strategy - the impact of political system. It is often said that the linear-logic does not work well in conflict situations because there is no effective contract enforcement in international politics like there is in the domestic sphere. But democracies function on precisely the same linear logic when framing their goals and responses. The changing leadership and various interest groups in a democracy often fail in sustained adherence to a long term Grand strategy.

This is partially true but we cannot preclude the inherent resilience of democracies to implement long term grand strategies. The legitimacy of leadership is more important than longevity. Containment succeeded because of sustained adherence by successive administrations of various political hues and ideological inclinations. In a one-party system, The Chinese 'peaceful development' strategy has been consistently invoked in the post-Mao period tacitly acquiesced to if not outrightly endorsed by the PLA. Bi-partisanship and sustainability are thus important aspects. A grand strategy is often based on a long-term vision hence it strives to subsume short term distortions which change of leadership, crises, and operational problems tend to cause. A distinction has to be made between these and a national emergency or a revolution or some systemic change in international politics or relative capabilities which would significantly alter a nation's grand strategy. This is easier said than done. Democracies work in cycles with substantial transition periods in between. Leaders often attribute the mistakes of a policy to their predecessors. In multi-party democracies this problem is accentuated by coalitions and decentralisation problems. The genetic make-up of a political system should be examined to overcome this problem and necessary changes made. Proportional representation, abolishing demagogue acts like gerrymandering or caste-isation of constituencies and a legislative responsibility of every leadership to at least release an NSS document will certainly be steps in the right direction.

Linear-logic does not work well in conflict situations because there is no effective contract enforcement in international politics like there is in the domestic sphere

The challenges and opportunities available to a modern state in the competitive international system require quick reaction and pro-active policy making. A stagnant state is a regressive state in a competitive system. The demos should be sensitised to think strategically and certain decisions have to be eschewed in the interest of a grand strategy. Caution and Restraint while remaining intrinsic, cannot be used as a doctrinal excuse for inaction. Following from this, the Indian definition of the concept

The challenges and opportunities available to a modern state in the competitive international system require quick reaction and proactive policy making

of strategic autonomy therefore has caveats. Strategic autonomy cannot be put forward as a strategy per se because essentially all nations in the world are looking for strategic autonomy all the time. Independent decision making is a basic corollary of the principle of sovereignty. Nations need to incentivise non-interference and disincentivise interference through concrete military and politico-economic strategies. Autonomy is not a panacea in itself. Strategy goes beyond it and lies in the exercise of that autonomy through tangible policies and postures in a carefully calibrated incremental pursuit of a grand strategy.

Where can we find examples of effective grand strategies? For the sources of research in Grand Strategy one can invoke history because as the cold war strategist John Lewis Gaddis⁸ puts it: We use the History because they are transferrable, the future is obviously unpredictable and the present is ephemeral. From Thucydides to the Byzantine, from Chanakya to Machiavelli, from Clausewitz to Kennan, From Wilson to Bush, from Bismarck to Kissinger, from Mao to Deng, from Palmerston to Churchill, from Nehru to Obama, history is rich with different conceptions of grand strategy providing us with rich bodywork with which to research on this subject. The paper is one such attempt in that direction.

8. Professor John Lewis Gaddis, Yale University, Lecture, "*George Kennan and American Grand Strategy during the Cold War*", Naval War College, October 3rd 201. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsRV5Tz5Rmc