EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GRAND STRATEGY

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Abstract

Efficiency and effectiveness are fundamental parameters of management that indicate the managed system’s overall viability and progress. Therefore their assessment is equally important at each of management’s 3 levels – the operational, tactical and strategic one. However, methods for evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness are traditionally better developed at the lower operational level and used daily as something obligatory. Sophisticated quantitative techniques have been applied there since the times of F. W. Taylor. In contrast, the estimation of efficiency and effectiveness of strategies is a rare practice. It does hardly stretch beyond assessment of effectiveness alone based on historical analysis or growth reports that give indirect, relative or partial indication of strategic adequacy. Strategic efficiency is hardly measured at all.

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Are strategies really subscribed to rates of success so high that make systematic and thorough assessment of their effectiveness and efficiency unnecessary? Is there a lasting guarantee that the strategic vision and objectives are reframed timely and accordingly to changing historical circumstances? If any serious doubts in this regard exist, what steps should be made? Are they worth at all?

Presumably, leaders’ awareness of current efficiency and effectiveness of particular strategic actions is a matter of utmost importance for securing systemic success. These are effective and efficient strategies that develop common meanings synchronizing processes within the managed system from top to bottom and thus leading to a general multiplier effect. These are effective and efficient strategies that provide those distant horizons of management that make lasting prosperity and security possible. Moreover, in an era of globalization management of big social entities such as entire countries or international economic and political megastructures cannot rely on traditional esteems of operational or even tactical efficiency.

In this context, the more general a strategy, the higher the importance of its parameters are for the managed system’s security, advancement and prosperity. Therefore efficiency and effectiveness particularly of grand strategies plays the most crucial role for strategic management.
and the overall system of management. Therefore this article is devoted precisely to the assessment of the quality of grand strategies.

Given the spatial and temporal caliber of processes at this highest systemic level it is hard to believe that relevant approaches could be as tangible as those used for measuring operational efficiency and effectiveness. Nonetheless, a maximum operability of the evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of grand strategies must be secured. This seems possible if the framework of grand strategy evaluation includes a complete and universally applicable set of criteria to compensate the use of incomplete unique facts or statistical data. It is important that those criteria correspond to grand strategy’s core sense. They should be an instrument for total assessment of the adequacy of the strategic intent and the price of its realization.

A separate pioneering study like this cannot achieve such goals in their entirety. The efforts here are aimed solely at outlining the general framework for analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of grand strategies. For this limited purpose the following problems should be determined sequentially: (1) what is the contemporary meaning of grand strategy, broader than its original close military importance developed against the traditional notion of strategy, (2) how does a universal model of a given state’s grand strategy ruling its economic, political and social development look like, and (3) how should this model be operationalized in order to determine the particular domains of effectiveness and efficiency variables. Thus the ultimate aim is to create a framework for further development of specific indicators to be tested in practical research on grand strategy cases.

**Grand Strategy as an Object of Assessment**

There are two types of strategies -- grand strategies and operational strategies. What has been called grand strategy in the last 4 decades was previously known as “general policy.” The first type corresponds to governance’s “long waves” that last decades while the second correspond to the span of just a few short years. One is open-ended with no strict termination point, the other -- with a fixed end exactly as plans do. Politicians who are strategic leaders, i.e. statesmen, are related primarily to the first type - the grand strategies of states and supranational groupings.

Grand strategy is not an allegory of a strategy that is simply “more significant” than “regular” ones. It is not “grand” because of having greater spatial or temporal dimensions. Rather, grand strategy differs from all other strategies in a country by having its unique function in the system of state governance. It is the strategy of all strategies: it binds together all sectoral strategies in a system by imposing on them a common sense similarly to the way such “regular” strategies in turn synchronize decisions and actions in separate areas of public activity.

However there is a significant difference between providing a common sense to all specific senses that frame activities in one or other sphere of social life and simply giving a general sense to all activities within a given sphere. The former is grand strategy, “the collection of plans and policies that comprise the state's deliberate effort to harness political, military, diplomatic, and economic tools together to advance that state's national interest.”\(^1\) This notion is

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\(^1\) Feaver, Peter. What is grand strategy and why do we need it? In: Foreign Policy, April, 2009
opposed to the latter – to specific strategy viewed as “the total pattern of decisions which shape the long-term capabilities of any type of operations and their contribution to the overall strategy.”

Thus grand strategy refers to the supreme level of socio-political reasoning of statesmen, i.e. the higher stratum of strategic governance, while all other strategies constitute a lower stratum of strategic governance. Apparently the higher grand strategic sublevel of state governance answers the question “What should be done” while the lower is concentrated on answering “How this should be done”. Sectoral operational strategies are continuations and specifications of grand strategy. In other words, if a country has a grand strategy, sectoral strategies become its system components.

The modern concept adheres to what military historian B. H. Liddell Hart once wrote: “The role of grand strategy – higher strategy – is to co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of the war – the goal defined by fundamental policy.”

Associated with the military context, the original definition of Liddell Hart appears too narrow. If his definition is to be followed strictly, its use should be limited only to big wars that make a country use its full capacity. What happens if there is no clearly identifiable threat? Liddell Hart does not provide tools for defining the policy objective of a grand strategy. It turns out that politics itself is determined in direct relation to a particular enemy in an ongoing conflict! What comes first, and what - second? It is not just that grand strategy comprises the “purposeful employment of all instruments of power available to a security community” for the mobilization of the economic resources, man-power and even moral resources of nations in order to sustain the fighting capacity per se. “From the outset of forging the concept it was clear that grand strategy looks beyond the war to the subsequent peace thus binding both in a single purpose.”

Grand strategy is a system of synchronized “normal” strategies that are in equilibrium with each other. However the total effect of all such strategies together is completely different. Grand strategy provides not only the extremum (extreme maximization) behind simple maximum (maximization) like the “regular” strategies do, but exceed even that limit. It secures the continued extreme maximization. This horizon extends beyond maximizing as a goal per se. Each “regular” strategy aims at the extreme. Grand strategy is a prerequisite for achieving multiple ekstrema.

Obviously, due to the substantive differences between grand strategy and sectoral strategies briefly outlined above, issues of effectiveness and efficiency stand quite differently in both. In this context sectoral policies do not differ significantly from tactical and operational management. Sectoral strategies are defined as “plans of action designed to achieve a vision.” This is pretty close to the notion of traditional planning. Plans are designed to achieve interrelated goals of best exploitation of resources and opportunities. The difference is that the vision is a specific set of goals devised to gaining a position of advantage over competitors. In both cases the word is of maximization in a given situation. Efficiency and effectiveness were

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5 Ibid.
originally industrial engineering and later business concepts designed exactly to measure maximization. Therefore the measurement of both parameters of sectoral strategies is well known.

What is Strategic effectiveness in this relatively simple and familiar context – strategy seen as a plan for achieving of goals? Most often it is defined as a “way of thinking and acting as an organization to ensure the achievement of its vision, mission, and goals.” It follows that strategic effectiveness is an organization's ability to set the right goals and consistently achieve them. This effectiveness is seen as the outcome of a three-stage process:

The Formulation Stage of strategic effectiveness assesses the current situation, develops a clear strategic direction for the future, and formulates a strategic map for how the organization achieves that direction. Some consulting models refer to this stage as strategic planning. It is driven by 3 quite well known questions classical in strategic management: What is the current situation? What is the future the organization is trying to create? What is the strategic map for achieving this future? The Implementation Stage focuses on effective implementation of the strategic priorities and objectives outlined in the strategic map. The Review and Adjust Stage provides regular opportunities to adapt both the strategy and the approach to implementation to meet ever-changing realities.

However, grand strategy of a state is something completely different and requires a different approach to the definition of efficiency and effectiveness.

Unlike sectoral strategies it provides a result exceeding maximization. Grand strategy aims at the extremum, not the maximum. This is the maximax, i.e. the maximum with greatest possible value in the most favorable situation among few. Still, grand strategy does not stop even at this point. It aims to provide extreme maximization not once but repeatedly over a long period of time.

In this context grand strategy motivates specific decisions made today that will lead to the accumulation of profits beyond today's highs at some point tomorrow. This effect is achieved through the retreat from direct maximization or control of change in the name of reaching the extreme in a future moment, that is, the maximal maximum. Moreover, grand strategy is not

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about a single achievement of this extreme but rather about the long-term positioning at the extreme heights. This means systematic achievement of extreme maximization. Thus grand strategy causes a multiplier effect of securing a chain of accumulated extreme peaks. This strategic effect explains the historical "miracles" like the German one after World War II or South Korea in the 1960s. Grand strategy becomes the main instrument of statesmanship. For the past 2500 years strategizing at the highest level has been the art of success of states and nations. Where no miracles happen, the only equivalent source of success is following a grand strategy.

This context above outlines grand strategy in the light of political economy. However there exists another context, equivalent to political economy in terms of importance but opposite as core sense - the moral economy. Maximizing benefits is no longer of central importance. Instead, moral economy’s basis is self-actualization, self improvement, the triumph of the unique value system, featuring the particular state and nation. Both individuals and nations seek not only to maximize benefits but also sustainable self-identification and, when possible, cultural domination. The achievements in this regard are usually not ranked higher or lower than maximization and economic development. The chain of grand strategic goals in this context includes cultural survival as the minimum achievement, if possible – development, reinforcement and adaptation of the own identity and when circumstances allow, regional or global cultural dominance.

All this means that grand strategy keeps and defends the essence of the mission that the nation believes and is believed to carry. It develops further that mission to a certain extent adapting it to new historical circumstances. However most important is that grand strategy is the system by which the mission is carried out. This is why grand strategy is an instrument of persistent actualization of the nation’s unique nature. Viewed this way, grand strategy has no endpoint and should not never have it. Grand strategy is about development and not about any type of final collective welfare status. Therefore it should be perceived as organization of the constant process of national self-realization. This processual specificity of grand strategy makes it have intermediate targets that follow from a general strategic intent rather than some sort of a great final goal.

Grand strategy is not a tool for achieving predetermined endpoints – those final states just mentioned – in contrast to regular sectoral strategies. This makes grand strategy far from being a plan. Despite this fact it is not an amorphous formation. It does fix (though fixes it in a flexible way) a strong intention – motivation for national self-realization, development and welfare in a given unique format designed and motivated on the basis of what this nation perceives as its specific values. Pursuing tendencies instead of a final goal still produces goals, however these are many consecutive goals: grand strategy is an instrument of gradual setting chains of goals. Normally these goals are intended for a relatively distant, less familiar and vaguely controlled environment. No plan for 50 years ahead is possible for that reason as nothing definite is known for such a distant period in future. The formulation of those goals stemming from the grand strategic intention depends simultaneously on the expected parameters of not well known future

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7 See for example the Republic of Armenia’s National Security Strategy: it ranks the preservation of Armenian national identity among its highest priorities. Chancellor Adenauer insisted on integrity of Germany based on “Western Christian” values.
situations as well as strong own preferences and intentions. Conversely, planning is a chain of reactions, as rational and objective as possible, to expected situations in a relatively well known, controlled environment.

Grand strategy is the long winding and endless road of national self-assertion, development and well being that is enshrined in the unique set of values known as mission. The dynamics of this process requires continuous change of objectives within what is created ad hoc as grand strategic plan, depending on the situations of constant competition. Forming and implementing the grand strategy does not follow a script. In contrast to this classical strategic planning, characteristic of the formation and implementation of sectoral strategies is not more than a means of transforming inputs into output conditions and results in making the best use of resources. According to this quite common view strategy is a plan, scheme, a series of actions to be taken to achieve the objectives contained in a comprehensive plan for a long period of time organizational levels.

The creation of a grand strategy is a floating, diffuse and gradual process of gradual development of the strategy itself, not a completed first step before implementation. Regular rationality of setting first goals and then making them come true does not apply here. Grand strategic thinking has quite different prerequisites like values and copes with considerable uncertainty. Still, the gradual creation of a grand strategy steps on several solid points. An initial momentum inevitably exists and that is the concept of general direction of national self actualization and well being which form a preliminary strategic intent. The origin of this starting point is national culture, or specific values on which there is broad consent. The barely emerging grand strategy so far at this early stage is a relatively well-defined strategic mission and an outline of a strategic vision rough-hewn on the basis. Usually this stage of early formative development of grand strategy is the product of the lives of grand national strategic leaders. From that moment on, the strategy is formed gradually in the process of its implementation. Leaders interprete new situations in the light of the grand strategic intent and past practices and thus shape the socio-political, economic and cultural models that materialize further the body of the grand strategy developed. New strategic elements and practices are gradually accumulated and thus the strategy gains integrity as well as vitality. This view is gaining more momentum and is known as "strategy as practice."\(^8\)

The following summary about the modern political concept of grand strategy can be made. Grand strategy provides not only the maximum benefits for the nation but stretches beyond it by securing the extreme values of maximization. However it exceeds even that limit. Grand strategy is about systematic extreme maximization in long time periods. As a system of synchronized “regular” (sectoral) strategies it develops a state of equilibrium among such strategies. The overall effect of all those strategies bound by grand strategy is completely different from a sum of separate extreme maximizations. It has two faces, one on political economy, other things - the moral economy: sustainable development and strong national identity. These two sides of the coin known as grand strategy are made possible by means of securing a lasting competitive advantage and strategic partnership in a globalized setting.

Towards Models of Effectiveness and Efficiency Grand Strategy

It is well known that, for most organizational levels, goals are operative (functional), aimed at organizing the efficient management of processes. These objectives determine the meaning of actions. They do not identify the general reason of existence of the entire system by formulating a clear cut mission. Such operative non-strategic goals are depending almost totally on the shift of situations⁹ and and therefore constantly changing. Thus conventional strategies (not to mention plans at the tactical and operational level) form goals relating to profit (efficiency, market shares), output (the “end product” or services provided), functions (the performance of objectives and desired behaviours within an organization) and the like.

However this is not true for the supreme level of public management. Grand strategy goals neither directly depend on situations nor relate to separate operations. It is only grand strategy that has the whole system as its object. Its mission is the preservation of the system and where possible its supremacy over other systems. In his classification of goals, strategy guru Henry Minztberg defines such goals as “system goals”. He stated that there are 4 system goals – “survival, efficiency, control, and growth.”

Mintzberg is not the only one who noticed that survival and growth are the integral super-objectives of each system. I have never seen a more compact judgment by the thought of the famous conductor and intellectual Pierre Boulez’s of what life is about is, “The goal of life is not happiness; it is existence.”¹⁰ – often defined as domination by political systems. The supreme reason of system management is existence and growth. Grand strategy specifies the parameters of this common sense and transfers it to the lower levels of government. Grand strategy of a society shall specify its unique mission, why this mission is a particular value, i.e. why it is worth it to be realized. Along with this, grand strategy forms further the vision for the overall development of this society and and the ways its socio-political model could dominate globally.

So if we talk about the “grand” effect that a grand strategy achieves, it appears as a minimum to be the very survival of the public model which it builds; if favorable conditions exist survival is complemented by growth and finally dominance of the system over the rest of systems in its milieu. Accordingly, the degree of achievement and progress in this direction should be the framework of grand strategy effectiveness.

This general definition of effextiveness of the higher strategic level should be operationalized to serve the main task of this research – the creation of a framework for evaluating effectiveness and efficiency. Goals of this higher level, the effectiveness and efficiency of which is to be assessed, are not monolithic.

Firstly, system goals are directed inwards and outwards. To succeed in achieving a system’s goal, there must be an inward reason as well as an outward process of achievement of the desired outcome. A goal for the system itself in relation to other systems is what we call an ‘outward’ goal. An outward goal is achieved if backed by an inward goal. Inner goals define the

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⁹ See for instance Charles Perrow’s classification of multiple organizational goals consisting of Output, system, Product, and Derived goals

¹⁰ Matthew Fox, The Goal of Life is Living, Inward/outward, 03-25-2010
system’s reason for being and secure the inner factors of system integrity. Outward goals with no inward goal cannot be fulfilled.\textsuperscript{11}

Second, higher values of the system are so general that they are in fact a unity of value and rational reasoning. At this higher level, the reason of existing merges with the direction of development, i.e. the answer of the question "What?" coincides with the answers to the question "How?" Therefore, the goals of grand strategy fall simultaneously within the domains of what is called moral economy and political economy. Briefly, moral economy is considered the sphere of cultural beliefs motivating behavior (value based goals) while political economy is traditionally seen as the sphere of rational (maximizing) economic and political motives influencing behavior (interest based goals).

A simple matrix can be constructed on this basis which frames the aspects of the effectiveness of grand strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Economy</th>
<th>Political Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inward Oriented</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outward Oriented</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where

- cell 1 corresponds to inward oriented moral goal of grand strategy
- cell 2 corresponds to inward oriented political and economic goal of grand strategy
- cell 3 corresponds to outward oriented moral goal of grand strategy
- cell 4 corresponds to outward oriented political and economic goal of grand strategy

The degree to which each of these goals is achieved shows the degree of effectiveness of a grand strategy.

If effectiveness of grand strategy is assessed by the rate of achievement of its goals, its efficiency is evaluated by the rate of rationality\textsuperscript{12} of the methods by which these goals are achieved.

\textsuperscript{11} David Samuel, Why You Need To Know Your Outward and Inward Goal Before You Can Succeed, Entrepreneur Monk, April 9, 2009

\textsuperscript{12} In the paradigm of maximizing behavior
The methods of grand strategy may vary but generally fall into two major groups: competition and cooperation. Both are applied simultaneously by statesmen: grand strategy defines certain countries as permanent rivals, others as permanent strategic partners who share the same key values. Sustainable competitive advantage cannot be ensured without the support of its partners.

Again a simple matrix can be constructed on this basis which frames the aspects of the efficiency of grand strategy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Economy</th>
<th>Political Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

where

- cell 1 corresponds to strategic cooperation in the moral sphere
- cell 2 corresponds to strategic cooperation in the political and economic sphere
- cell 3 corresponds to strategic competition in the moral sphere
- cell 4 corresponds to strategic competition in the political and economic sphere

The degree of rationality of these groups of method (i.e. best ratio of resources used to results achieved) shows the degree of efficiency of a grand strategy.

Towards a General Model of Grand Strategy Efficiency and Effectiveness

The general contents of these theoretically constructed cells of the abstract models of grand strategy effectiveness and efficiency is as follows:

**Effectiveness of Grand Strategy Goals**

1. The *inward oriented moral* goal of grand strategy is reinforcing national and cultural identity. It is the paramount goal which is at the forefront in the whole chain of goal setting in management. It relates to self-determination of the subject of grand strategy and therefore leads to the formulation of the strategic mission: “how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes
oneself as one aspires to be in the future.”¹³ National identity relates to the collective self-image that shapes the mental model of the nation, and this model forms the most important prerequisite of all that follows – subjectivity, “the totality of one's self-construal”¹⁴ i.e. turns the nation into a subject of strategy. National identity creates the capacity for collective self-reflection and the collective awareness of self.¹⁵

The Inward oriented in the Moral Economy domain: Reinforcing National and Cultural Identity.

2. The *inward oriented* goal of grand strategy in the *Political Economy* domain is sustainable economic and institutional development. After securing the fundamental condition, well developed subjectiveness of the nation, the next most important tasks are the economic progress and stable government institutions. All these goals cannot exist without each other -- no nation exists as a viable subject without economic development and no sustainable development of the national economy is possible without steady government institutions.

3. The *outward oriented moral* goal of grand strategy is the protection of national identity and, where possible, cultural expansion. The national security strategies of some countries with large diaspora can serve as a good example in this regard¹⁶. There are particularly clear examples in the sphere of production of TV series, music, etc.

4. The *outward oriented* goal of grand strategy in the *Political Economy* domain is national security and economic expansion. In this context, national security should be interpreted in a broader sense than its narrow defensive core. Security is the reverse side of the same coin it shares with economic competitiveness. Thus interpreted, security has a positive effect as well. It is the result of the special position of the state in global politics and global market that provides sustainable maximization for the national economy as a whole.

Grand strategy effectiveness is securing all these 4 goals of grand strategy. Indicators should be further developed for the assessment of the progress made in the realization of each of them.

**Efficiency of Grand Strategy Methods**

1. The method of cooperation used for realization of grand strategic goals in the moral economy domain is securing national consent and active participation in the development of a strategic coalition based on shared values.

2. The method of cooperation used for realization of grand strategic goals in the Political Economy domain is Good Governance.

The comparative analysis of different concepts of Good Governance¹⁷ and the ensuing "lists" of its basic properties reveals the following frequency characteristics, respectively highlights the contents of a generalized concept:

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¹³ Weinreich, 1986
¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁵ Leary & Tangney, 2003
¹⁶ See the NSS of the Republic of Armenia for example
¹⁷ Own research based on relevant documents of The World Bank, The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, OECD, UN, EC.
The model makes impression with its asymmetry. Contrary to what could normally be expected, the existing concept of Good Governance emphasizes twice stronger all possible aspects of legality and legitimacy of government (its democracy, fairness and balance) than its rationality (efficiency, stability and capacity). Good Governance is a political, not a management concept. In this perspective, the so-called moral economy contents prevails decisively over the economic one in the “official” concept of good governance.

3. The method of competition used for realization of grand strategic goals in the Moral Economy domain is maintenance of a constant global initiative. The same means “agenda writing” or “surprise” in the categories of Clausewitz. The simplification of the model of management reduces the sense of its strategic level down to a simple process of goals achievement. This is due to the excessive rationalism. The rational person accepts unreservedly the attainment of objectives when consistent with objective reality, but is suspicious to the setting of targets perceived as too subjective. In grand strategy’s formative context, however, goal setting loses its objectivity. Strategic goals are not as tactical or operational ones attained strictly in accordance with objective conditions. Strategic goals are built on values, so their achievement leads to self-determination. Simple measurement of performance does not serve the goal of assessing a strategy’s efficiency and effectiveness. Strategy formulation and realization is a political process, a “discontinuous” one (Mintzberg). Through trial and error the successful actions gradually selected become the permanent model of foreign and domestic policy. This model combines the initial value priorities with the general characteristics of the situation.

4. The method of competition used for realization of grand strategic goals in the Political Economy domain is providing sustainable competitive advantage over competitors in an environment filled with change and challenges. Achieving a privileged position (well illustrated by the famous bridgehead or strategic heights of the military) is the only chance for the state to enhance its resistance against its competitors – other states of relatively similar capabilities, i.e. relatively equal in opportunities, resources, organization or power. The equality makes this task very difficult to be achieved by a country alone without its support of strategic partners. By guaranteeing sustainable competitive advantage grand strategy is able to secure the survival of

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18 See simple tools as http://www.managementstudyguide.com/strategy-evaluation.htm
the national identity, the sustainable development of the economy and certain levels of cultural as well as economic expansion. This in turn means that grand strategy promotes the implementation of the mission, i.e. the health of its unique nature. Viewed this way, grand strategy has no endpoint. Rather it is a process – a process of constant “self-actualization” of national specificity and sustainable development of national economy.

Each of these methods realizes each of the grand strategy’s goals. However there exists some parallelism: goal 1 is best secured by method 1, etc.

The overall model of Effectiveness – Efficiency of grand strategy looks this way:
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Feaver, P. What is grand strategy and why do we need it? In: Foreign Policy, April, 2009.


http://www.managementstudyguide.com/strategy-evaluation.htm
