

## On Grand Strategy: A Conceptual Study and International Relations\*

Grand Strateji Üzerine: Kavramsal Bir Çalışma ve Uluslararası İlişkiler

**Mehmet Çağatay ABUŞOĞLU\*\***

**Başvuru Tarihi:** 12.11.2022

**Kabul Tarihi:** 14.11.2022

**Makale Türü:** Araştırma Makalesi

### Abstract

States establish long-term plans and make foreign policy in compliance with these plans. However, foreign policy may not always reflect the long-term plan. In this sense, purely observing foreign policy may give misleading results and present short-term assessments. With short-term assessments, it is difficult to observe the breaks in foreign policies and to observe the harmony within. The grand strategy, on the other hand, focuses on the long-term plans on which foreign policy is based, and the harmony between policies. In this study, the features and the stages of the grand strategy that contain in the long-term plans of the states were examined. This study also aimed to develop the concept of grand strategy and engage it in conformity with its use in International Relations. Therefore in this study from which sources the grand strategy can arise has been analysed, as well. Additionally, under the grand strategy logic, which stages do the states pass till how a foreign policy logic is formed also underlied in this study.

**Keywords:** Grand Strategy, International Relations, State

### Özet

Devletler uzun vadeli planlar kurar ve bu planlara uygun olarak dış politika üretirler. Ancak, dış politika her zaman uzun vadeli planı yansıtmayabilir. Bu anlamda, salt dış politika gözlemlenmesi yanıltıcı sonuçlar verebilecek ve kısa vadeli değerlendirmeler sunacaktır. Kısa vadeli değerlendirmelerle dış politikadaki kırılmaları anlamlandırılmak ve içerisindeki ahengi gözlemlemek oldukça zordur. Grand strateji ise bu anlamda dış politikanın dayandığı uzun vadeli planlara ve politikalar arasındaki ahenge odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, grand stratejinin devletin uzun vadeli planlarını hangi özellikleriyle ve aşamalarla ihtiva edebileceği incelenmiştir. Çalışma ayrıca kavramın geliştirilmesi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler'deki kullanımına uygun olarak angaje edilmesi amaçlandı. Bu amaca uygun olarak grand stratejinin hangi kaynaklardan doğabileceği incelenmiştir. Ayrıca dış politika noktasına gelinceye kadar devletlerin grand strateji mantığına uygun olarak hangi aşamalardan geçtiği çalışmada yer almıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Grand Strateji, Uluslararası İlişkiler, Devlet

### Introduction: Grand Strategy and International Relations

States' main objective is to maintain their independence. Beyond this main objective, often they tend to extend their influence, and their dominion; The classical tools at their disposal are: armed force, wealth, and allies (Howard, 2001, p. 2). According to these classical tools, the primary way states resort to their ends is through

\*This article is produced from the PhD thesis.

\*\*Dr., cagatay-abusoglu@hotmail.com.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-7869-2156

war. While war is one of the basic facts of the international relations, strategy is an integral part of the war. The concept of strategy, which is generally associated with the command on the battlefield, has also been used in the sense of a war trick applied to achieve victory (Earle, 1948, p. viii). The association between war and international politics, which is a classical period interpretation of International Relations, has undergone a small change in the modern period. Herein, armed forces and wealth are still the primary factors in understanding the power of the state. Moreover, diplomacy, public opinion and psychological factors were added to these elements. In fact, these factors, which were fused in other power elements, are now noticeable separately. With this change, the concept of strategy, which is the key to victory in the war, has been questioned. As a result of this questioning, the grand strategy has been accepted as the structure above the military strategy that points the political target. Thus the tactic is to use troops in combat; the strategy is to lead battles to win the war; (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 206) grand strategy, on the other hand, is accepted as the ability to direct politics in the event of victory or defeat after the war. Grand strategy is the highest level of strategy and guides other strategies.

Strategy is part of Security Studies, just as security studies is part of International Relations (Baylis, Wirtz, Cohen ve Gray, 2002, p. 12). As can be understood, strategy is not a purely military issue. The fact that the concept of strategy is included in the discipline of International Relations has created an environment that can be evaluated differently from military studies and can enable the analysis of causal mechanisms in political processes. With this conceptual separation, the field of study has also become apparent. Military strategy has a meaning that includes operations on the battlefield, while grand strategy involves the political goal fought for. Military historians first used the concept of grand strategy in the 1920s to harmonize military and non-military actions (Doğan, 2016, p. 156). Grand strategy emerged as an important concept within the discipline of strategic studies during the 1970s (Morgan-Owen, 2020, p. 354).

To understand grand strategy, it is necessary to identify what it is not. At this point, we can consider two important concepts used by researchers in the International Relations discipline for international policy analysis. The first of these is foreign policy. Foreign policy is also a phenomenon that is analyzed, but when examined through the grand strategy, it is the final stage and behaviour of the states in accordance with their grand strategy. Another important concept, the doctrine, should be considered as the subject or region that the leadership focuses on in the grand strategy. In this sense, grand strategy is not a foreign policy or doctrine, but the political logic that includes and directs them.

Accordingly, there is a typical problem of level of analysis regarding grand strategy analysis in the discipline of International Relations. One of the most important features that will be explained further in the following parts of this study is that grand strategy is applied in the long term that guides global politics. This shows that grand strategies cannot be handled at the individual level. Because for states, the term long term means 50 to 100 years processes, but it is not possible for a leader to stay in power for that long. For this reason, there is a problem of analysis level in grand strategy studies based on the conceptualization of leadership. A leader can make foreign policy in line with the grand strategy during his/her administration, but cannot carry out a grand strategy on his/her own. Ultimately, the appropriate level of analysis for grand strategy is systemic. While the state is creating its grand strategy, it includes all the actors, threats and opportunities in the international system in their calculations. Such a broad perspective is possible at the systemic level analysis. The systemic level of analysis permits us to examine international relations in the whole (Singer, 1961, p. 80). In accordance with the long-term understanding of the states, analysis on a global scale will provide an understanding of the grand strategy. It is a fact that a successfully analysed grand strategy will increase its predictive ability. Grand strategy studies have and will have an important place for the discipline of International Relations to get out of the historical analysis spiral and gain a foresight capability.

### **Features of Grand Strategy**

Grand strategy studies have focused on the great powers rather than the small and middle powers (Kennedy, 1991, p. 6) because making global policies and being able to implement these policies in the long term are abilities that require power. This approach makes dominant distinction between great powers and the others

in international politics understandable. While the great powers make policies within the framework of their grand strategies, small and middle powers respond to these policies at the scale of their power. In other words, great powers are the arsonists of international politics, and small and medium powers are the firefighters. Great powers behave like arsonists and choose the field and direction of international politics to start the fire while others, like firefighters, struggle against fires. The arsonist-firefighter metaphor is another expression of Thucydides' famous quote "dominant exact what they can and the weak concede what they must" (2009, p. 302), which has an important place in International Relations.

The great powers, which are the main actors of international politics, have desires to extend their influence and even dominate beyond interests and threats. "To do so effectively, great powers need a conceptual map of the World and a grand strategy that follows from it aimed at keeping the international ends they pursue in balance with the means available to attain those ends" (Kupchan, 2003, p. 3). Preparing for potential ends and threats gives grand strategy a visionary function. In other words, the grand strategy is the framework that determines the necessary policies for a state to predict how the world is and should be (Krasner, 2010, p. 4). In summary, grand strategy conveys ideas about the future.

Setting long-term ends means that grand strategy includes vision of the future. However, it is not a matter of dreaminess when grand strategy contains ideas about the future. Imagined future must be connected with reality; otherwise the grand strategy will collapse (Gaddis, 2018, p. 21). It is essential to be sufficiently open and aware for a successful strategy for the future (Yarger, 2006, p. 73). Hence, realism comes first among the vital principles that should not be exceeded for grand strategy. In politics, overstepping of realism, and loss of clarity and awareness are likely, by ideological obsession. Ideological obsessions drive the grand strategy into collapse, as it distracts the state from realism, focusing desires and ambitions. The grand strategy, which loses its realism and takes shape based on the views of policymakers, will cause the state to have a problem with survival.

Table 1. Strategy levels (Martel, 2015, p. 30)

	Grand Strategy	Strategy	Operations	Tactics	Technology
<b>Geopolitic Scale</b>	Global	All threats of war and conflict	One particular theater of war	Battlefield	Home front / Academy Industry
<b>Temporal Scope</b>	Long term (Decades)	Med term (Years)	Short term (Weeks to Months)	Very short term (Minutes to Days)	Variable time horizon
<b>Types of Ends</b>	Highest political ends	Overall military victory	Campaign victory	Achievement of tactical objectives	Competitive advantage over enemies
<b>Types of Means</b>	All (diplomatic, informational, military, economic)	Military, information, economic	Military, information	Military	Technical expertise

Since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political end, the value of this end must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in magnitude and also in duration (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 92). This sentence, which expresses the relationship of grand strategy with military strategy, underlines that wars should be shaped compliance with political ends. For states, war is not epic stories and scenes of pride. The only reason for attempting war is the political end, and while grand strategy represents the political end here, war is the subject of military strategy. Military strategy is about how the war will be managed and hierarchically

it should be under the grand strategy that is concern with the international political and economic conditions and the purpose of the war (Freedman, 2013, p. 119). The logic that can save the state even if the operational and tactical mistakes continue and even if the war is lost lies in the grand strategy. There are examples of wars in history where the hierarchy of strategy was lost and thus victory became meaningless because of military strategy’s guidance. Although they are remembered for their unrealistic attitudes towards geography and climate, Napoleon and A. Hitler are also prominent parts of history with their war-oriented doomed to defeat strategy that was without the balance of ends-means and resulted in the loss of strategy hierarchy.

Another important part of grand strategy is technology. Technology could increase means for ends within grand strategies. In particular, the development of military equipment and the advancement of transportation means that grand strategy cannot be the same as it was a century ago. The advantage of the results to be obtained in the field of technology means power for the states. A state with increasing means will reach its ends more easily both on the battlefield and in its grand strategy. The cannons developed by the Ottoman Empire for the conquest of Istanbul, the invention of the steam engine and the navy established by England, and the atomic bomb obtained after the technological revolution created by the US are examples of the advantages created by technology. Today, states attach importance to technological development due to their quest to strengthen themselves.

It is possible to embody technology through academic power while considering technology within the scope of its effect on grand strategy. The academic power of each country can show itself with the patents it has obtained and the knowledge it has produced for itself. In other words, in addition to the military and economic power accepted within the grand strategy, the academic power that develops these elements and ensures their continuity also has an important place. Especially after reaching power, the continuity of this power is related to the knowledge, technology and R&D capacities of the states, in short, their academic power. If the wealth of resources alone or the military capacity provided by purchasing is not supported by academic power, one aspect of the grand strategy will be missing. At this key aspect, the research opportunities of universities, the increase in doctoral studies from all fields, the ability to obtain patents, and most importantly, the ability to allocate resources to these initiatives are the issues that will strengthen the grand strategy due to its academic power. While academic power has a direct impact on the grand strategy and thus achieving the ends of the state, it is inevitable that it indirectly creates soft power on people who seek research opportunities.

As mentioned in the table above, one of the important features of the grand strategy is that it is for long-term. While the states follow the grand strategies they have created within the framework of their basic interests, they know that this is a long process over time. While the grand strategies continue, leadership of the state may change, but the newcomers carry out their policies within the framework of this grand strategy. In summary, this situation shows that the grand strategy is in a position above politics. Although the leaders or groups that govern the state change over time, the long-term persistence of the grand strategy forces newcomers to adapt. Specialization is an important requirement for the grand strategy to be successful in identifying long-term goals, threats, and opportunities. The competence of policy-making institutions and boards will directly affect the predictive ability of the grand strategy. It will be possible for states with foresight ability and successful planning to take long-term steps.

Table 1. Features of grand strategy

	Features of Grand Strategy	Descriptions
1.	Realistic	It accepts the world as it is and acts accordingly.
2.	Dynamic	It acts in harmony with changing conditions and shows flexibility.
3.	Rational	It is separated from ideological and emotional attitudes.
4.	Holistic	It deals with all the power elements together.
5.	Self-Helper	The major point is self power, alliances etc. is secondary.

6.	Directory	It guides policy makers.
7.	Bellicose	It constantly collides with the grand strategies of other powers.
8.	Systemic	It takes shape based on the international system.

The fact that it is long-term does not mean that the grand strategy is a rule book to be followed in a fixed way (Posen, 2008, p. 84) . “Grand strategies are not and should not be static” (Fontaine and Kristin, 2012, p. 6) . A grand strategy must have flexibility in terms of ends and threats. New challenges should be taken into account for the future without missing long-term ends (Sinnreich, 2011, p. 257) . Grand strategy is dynamic because by its nature international politics is unpredictable. In this case, it remains unknown what will happen to the states and their grand strategies. In this emerging picture, it is a skill for states to be flexible while following their grand strategies. The grand strategy must be flexible in order to be long-term, or it may face the danger of collapse. The success of the grand strategy depends on constant change and adaptation (Murray, 2011, p. 11). A grand strategy that has lost its flexibility is amenable to resolution by other states. This puts the state at a disadvantage in terms of survival. Being flexible will allow the grand strategy to identify alternative routes in line with the target. Considering the opposite of this situation, if the state insists on a single path, it will easily be prevented from reaching its end in terms of other states.

Dynamism is a virtue that should be preserved not only when the grand strategy fails or dissolves, but also when it succeeds. Clausewitz, the author of “On War”, speaks of the culmination of attack and victory. There is a culminating point of attack and victory, and the dominant position should be maintained by defending before this point is exceeded, if the culminating point is exceeded, the use of force that harms itself beyond being useless occurs (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 528, 570). These considerations about attack, victory, and war in a broader sense apply to grand strategy as well. After a state achieves its long-term goals with its grand strategy, it should focus on preserving its gains instead of continuing its aggressive policies for more. Pursuing an aggressive policy is a method that exhausts the means-ends balance and is difficult to maintain. For this reason, policymakers should be able to correctly identify the culmination of the grand strategy and realize that the successful grand strategy may also need transformation.

One of the elements that gives the grand strategy the identity of being a “grand” is that it is followed on a global scale. Therefore, the grand strategy reflects the global vision of the state and the logic of policies that will disappoint the enemies (Deibel, 2007, p. 3). Any regional policy can be similar to the policy in another region, as well as differ due to the grand strategy. What is decisive at this point is what the state expects from the grand strategy. For example, if a state has decided to expand its area of interest, a status quo/protectionist in one region may pursue a destructive/revisionist policy in another. Although the actions are different, it should not be forgotten that the grand strategy is operated globally in terms of purpose. All components of the international system should be included in the plan, as the grand strategy reflects the global perspective. In order to understand the system and how it may change, the ability to see the interrelationship of all components is necessary, which makes grand strategy an ecological discipline (Gaddis, 2009, p. 9). In conformity with the claim of globality, the perspective should be broad in a way that does not exclude any element.

Grand strategy means the synchronization of military and non-military elements for states in the struggle for survival and creating a future, and offers an intellectual architectural structure for the state to achieve its higher interests (Brands, 2014, p. 2-3). For this architectural structure to stand on solid foundations, it should be realistic. While focusing on the possibilities for the future, the realities of the day should bear in mind and harmony should be sought between the future and reality (Murray, 2011, p. 3). It is dangerous to articulate sentimental views during the creation of a grand strategy. A grand strategy in which ideological, moral, or emotional aspects is involved means that it has begun to move away from reality. Hereby, the worldview of domestic political structures and policymakers should be kept out of the grand strategy to the maximum extent.

If the desired world is thought to exist or should exist and a grand strategy is formed accordingly, the danger of collapse will again arise. The ability to be realistic is also vital to another grand strategy quality, flexibility. Facts and a pragmatic approach should be taken as a basis so that flexibility is not lost. International politics is an environment where it is necessary to remain grey between blacks and whites. The ability to stay grey is to be realistic and pragmatic. If realism is lost, it becomes clear which subjects are black or white, and thus flexibility is lost. It is possible that the steps to be taken within the framework of grand strategies guided by ideological dogmas will be understood and the ends will be revealed.

Fundamentally, foreign policy-making appears contradictory does not necessarily indicate a lack of focussing. The fact that foreign policymaking varies across regions and countries, which is also related to grand strategic flexibility, does not imply inconsistency. "... I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what my left-hand does. I may have one policy for Europe and one diametrically opposite for North and South America. I may be entirely inconsistent, and furthermore, I am perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if it will help win the war" (Kimball, 1991, p. 7). This famous statement by F. D. Roosevelt reveals that what may appear contradictory steps have a purposeful meaning in the strategist's mind. From this point of view, analyzing and understanding foreign policy does not mean that a state's high interests and grand strategy are understood.

War is one of the most important points to be considered to separate grand strategy from strategy. While war is the job of strategy, grand strategy determines which political ends the war started for. From this point of view, strategy begins and ends on the battlefield, but the grand strategy is carried out in peacetime as well as in wartime. The grand strategy does not begin with the beginning of the war, nor does it end with its end (Kennedy, 1991, p. 4). For this reason, the strategist is a constant student who is aware of the legacy of the past, the possibilities of the future, and the internal-external strategic environment (Yarger, 2006, p. 73). This studentship represents the ever-vigilant state of the grand strategy. Even if wars end in victory, gains are temporary and grand strategy should therefore adapt to the new situation. If war is focused and grand strategic ends are ignored, peace will have no meaning. If the grand strategy of a state fails to create the order/peace that will emerge after the war, victory is also meaningless. If the grand strategy is focused on war and victory, then the peace that will be reached cannot be benefited from, and it will nurture the seeds of the next war (Hart, 1991, p. 353). Due to the statement, it is necessary to win the peace as well as to be victorious in the war. M. K. Atatürk, on the other hand, made an important statement about grand strategy by stating that victory is not a goal in itself, but a tool that serves a larger goal and creates a new peace/order, and if it is not, victory is a futile effort ( Karal, 1991, p. 160). Grand strategy refers to a focus on peace/order beyond war and victory.

### **Sources of Grand Strategy**

Each state obtains from three sources while creating its grand strategy: geography, strategic culture and the international system. When examined within the framework of these three sources, it is seen that each state follows special and inimitable grand strategies. Despite being in the same international system, every state is unique regarding geography and strategic culture.

Geography is an undeniable fact for a state in grand strategy making (Reagan, 1988, p. 2). For the state, which is in an endless struggle for survival, geography reflects the threat. The power needed at the point of threat is also an issue related to geography. Because there is a direct proportion between the size of the land under the sovereignty of the state and the resources it can obtain, it is important for the state to have economic resources to protect itself and achieve its goals. The climate is another geographical issue that should not be ignored. The reason that puts the climate in the foreground is war. Organizing operations in geographical points and climates where human life is difficult is sufficient for the bankruptcy of military strategy.

Geopolitics, which means the political evaluation of geography, shows which state is close and far. Although advancing technology has shortened distances, nearby power poses a greater threat to states than distant ones, and the near needs to be balanced first. Again, being surrounded by mountain ranges, seas or oceans is also a geopolitical reality. While states surrounded by mountains, seas, or oceans are relatively safe, states without the geographical boundaries constantly face harassment from neighbouring states. "Cartography, like cognition

itself, is a necessary simplification that allows us to see where we are, and where we may be going” (Gaddis, 1991, p. 102). Geography and geopolitics are realities that states should consider when formulating the grand strategy. Napoleon and A. Hitler are two defeated leaders who disregarded geography and climate when constructing their grand and military strategies. Technology, ambition, or military belief will not be enough to go beyond the reality of geography. England, besides, acted in harmony with the characteristics of being an island country and targeted other geographies instead of the strong European continent for expansionism. When England formed a grand strategy like a continental, not an island state, the First World War broke out and eventually won an uncertain and even harmful victory.

Consistent with the requirement that grand strategy assessments be made at the systemic level, geography offers a vision beyond individuals and internal structures. In this regard, the saying “Ministers come and ministers go, even dictators die, but mountain ranges stand unperturbed” (Spykman, 1942, p. 41) shows that geography creates a reality beyond the leaders at the point of strategy formation. The power struggle between states is not a process that can be carried out independently of geography. So, the steps to be taken at the grand strategy point must be compatible with this reality.

The state is an organization invented by human beings to protect themselves. This organization is first influenced by the society that created it and bears its traces. Inherently, each state has a different strategic culture. Therefore, one of the inevitable sources of grand strategy is the strategic culture that contains prejudices (Murray, 2011, p. 9). Ideas conditioned emotional reactions, and habitual behaviours are the factors that affect the strategic culture. (Snyder, 1977, p. 8). Every state has an approach to defining itself, albeit at a minimum level, and this definition is followed by the other state and the harmony or conflict of cultural codes emerges. Although strategic culture is not a determinant to be considered purely, it is also not an element to be completely ignored. Culture, like strategy, is a living phenomenon and change is also in question for it. But because this change happens so slowly, the strategic culture can carry biases that have long-term effects. Although the strategy is a cultural construct, it is not possible to analyze strategy only through national culture (Roxborough & Levy, 2014, p. 109). But strategic action is always the expression of a whole culture (Black, 2021, p. 16). In other words, understanding the culture does not mean understanding the strategy, but the strategy always includes the culture.

“A nation’s sense of the future, which determines long-range foreign policy as well as present diplomatic manoeuvres, is based partly on its sense of the past” (Kern, 1983, p. 277). History influences the strategic culture by bearing perceptions and interpretations, and this effect is reflected in the strategic attitude and behaviour (Gray, 1999, p. 54). The historical enmity of the two states becomes a part of their strategic culture that may guide their grand strategies. Geopolitics is also effective here. States that are not separated from each other by natural borders and try to take advantage of each other’s weaknesses naturally see each other as a primary threat. Therefore, history also provides empirical data for grand strategy, apart from affecting the strategic culture. While forming their grand strategies, states should grasp the historical facts that create today (G. Hart, 2004, p. 5). Beyond the study of the past, history sheds light on the dangers of the future. As a result, it is important to benefit from historical experience for grand strategy. The rise and fall in history should be observed from every angle.

The strategic culture, which is formed by the influence of culture, history, and current motivation, has a prominent place in terms of analysis in determining the grand strategy. Behaviours and beliefs guide or constrain thought on strategic questions, influence the treatment of strategic issues, and outline strategic discussion (Snyder, 1977, p. 9). Therefore the uniqueness of the strategic culture distinguishes grand strategies from each other.

The issue of national motivation is also part of the strategic culture. While the grand strategy is being followed by the state, the volunteering of the people should be created and nurtured for the policies to be implemented (Kennedy, 1991, p. 5). The willingness and enthusiasm of the people are as important as having tangible power elements (Hart, 1991, p. 322). So much so that where there is no moral superiority, success is not possible (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 545). If the people stop standing behind the policies, the state will have difficulty maintaining its grand strategy despite its power. Considering today’s conditions, the use of tax in military or

non-military policies, the large expenditures from the country’s economy, and the dispatch of soldiers created from the population are issues that directly concern the public. If the support and enthusiasm of the nation are lost, it will not be possible for the state to continue the policy in the long run. At this point, it is understood that one of the most important processes of grand strategies is to create arguments. Before making policy within the grand strategy, states will seek to create a convincing impression to the outside world as well as provide national motivation by making arguments about how they and their actions want to be seen and understood. This search and the argument created are born out of the strategic culture.

The international system, which is another of the main sources that direct the grand strategy, is based on power relations. The structure of the international system is affected by the ordering principle, the functions of the units and the distribution of capabilities across the units, and a change in one of them mean that the structure of the international system changes (Waltz, 1979, pp. 100-101). From this point of view, it is not possible for a state to follow the grand strategy it desires by ignoring the conditions brought by the system (Murray, 2011, p. 8). While anarchy continues to exist as the ordering principle of the international system, the issue that most concerns the structure within the system is the distribution of capabilities between states. This distribution is the most powerful factor affecting the functioning of international politics. So much so that, with a change in the distribution of power, a state that was not a threat before may turn into a threat, while another is a threat, it may lose this feature and brand-new opportunities may arise. Technological developments and long wars are situations that have a transformative effect on the system, examples of which we have encountered throughout history. The transformation of the system should be followed by the states. Because the transformation of the international system will necessitate a change in the grand strategy.

**Grand Strategy Stages**

States, which differ from each other in terms of geography, power, culture, and history, should meticulously advance their grand strategies that they will follow on the way to survive in the anarchic international system. The art of strategy requires not only finding means to achieve a fixed end but also identifying realistic and desirable ends (Freedman, 2013, p. 137). The grand strategy, with the experience it contains, gives the state the ability to foresight, helps it prioritize targets and threats, balances the use of resources, develops its strengths, provides the opportunity to take advantage of the opponent’s weaknesses and creates an advantage in long-term competition (Brands, 2014, p. 9). After all, the creation of a grand strategy is of great importance for states.

Table 2. Grand strategy stages

	Grand Strategy Stages	Descriptions
1.	Determining ends	State interests and opportunities
2.	Detecting threats	Possible problems to survival
3.	Prioritization	Choosing the primary among interests and threats
4.	Establishing the means-ends balance	Identifying adequate spending
5.	Coordinating resources	How to use which power elements
6.	Creating an argument	Convincing the domestic and foreign public opinion to foreign policy
7.	Setting up scenarios	Evaluation of possibilities and uncertainties
8.	Foreign policy implementation	Attitude and behavior of the state

There are important stages that states should consider until they reach foreign policy implementation. When creating a grand strategy, states must first identify vital points of interest and opportunities that will provide a safer environment for themselves and their communities (Slaughter, 2012, p. 46). In fact, this is the most natural approach for every state. Because states are basically structures that pursue their interests. However, it should be realized that every interest and opportunity have a loser, in other words, an opponent in the zero-sum game logic. International politics is a field where every action has a reaction. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful and selective about the interests to be followed.

Also, “a compass will point you true north from where you’re standing, but it’s got no advice about the swamps and deserts and chasms” (Gaddis, 2018, p. 17), so determining ends isn’t enough. If there is one thing that the anarchic international system presents to states more than opportunities, it is threat. Since no state can ever be aware of the intention of another state or be sure that the existing intention will not change, suspicion and the related threat are always on the agenda. From this point of view, it is seen that there are numerous threats for every state. The occupation projects of the border neighbors, the moves of the great powers, the actions of terrorist organizations, and the economic pressures are the prominent international security threats. States should consider every threat here, just like interests and opportunities, and successfully identify each according to their level of impact.

Identifying interests and threats are two political processes that states have practiced for centuries. The first step that makes the grand strategy important is prioritization. An attempt to defend everything leaves everything defenseless (Posen, 2014, p. 4). There are countless areas of interest/opportunity and threat against states. However, it is not possible to deal with all of them at the same time, no matter how high the power level, and therefore prioritization is an important step (Brands, 2012, p. 8). Which threat and interest is more vital is the basic principle in prioritizing. Prioritization is the core of grand strategy. Among the ends, the vital ones are preferred and the others he is sacrificed (Gaddis, 2018, p. 14-15). Thanks to prioritization, it will be determined what to fight against in the long term. Mistakes to be made in prioritizing with moral or ideological concerns will mean that the real threat and interest cannot be understood, and eventually the state will weaken. As mentioned earlier, realism is the only point of view for prioritization.

The next step on which the grand strategy is based is to achieve the ends-means balance. The situation for which the power that requires prioritization will be consumed will be successful when the ends-means balance is established. In case of spending more resources than necessary for any ends, the state budget will start to run a deficit. This deficit will mean relative weakening. A state that aims to achieve the ends by overspending will fall behind other ends that it can reach more cost-effectively. This situation can mean an opportunity for the other state when viewed with the logic of a zero-sum game. States that want to pursue too many ends without being able to provide power and means fail in their ends that they can achieve in a better way and eventually become vulnerable to the enemy’s grand strategy (Brands, 2014, p. 7). The grand strategy, which spends its power at the expense of wear and loses the ends-means balance, is dragged towards collapse (Hart, 1991, p. 353). In other words, a grand strategy in which the ends-means balance is not successfully established will create the opportunity for success for the grand strategy of the other state. To summarize, the grand strategy is a guide that includes the definition of national interests and threats and expresses which tools and resources will be used for these interests and threats (Dueck, 2006, p. 11). In parallel with the lack of this guide, it has been seen that the great empires were dissolved in one fell swoop with the loss of the ends-means balance. The “imperial overstretch” argument put forward by P. Kennedy is an example of this situation. States that go into extreme expansion will lose the balance between their military actions, political goals and economic realities, and thus they may perish (Kennedy, 1987). Therefore, the ends-means balance has a vital place in the success of grand strategies. In this regard, J. L. Gaddis gives the following example: “Octavian rose by teaching himself self-control; Antony sank by forgetting it... Napoleon lost his empire by confusing aspirations with capabilities; Lincoln saved his country by not doing so” (2018, p. 309).

One of the basic approaches of international relations emerges between prioritization and ends-means balance, self-help principle. The only that will ensure the security of the states in the international system, which may

be anarchic and conflicting, is themselves. The best way to survive in this system where the self-help principle operates is to be the strongest (Mearsheimer, 2014, p.33). The first element that will keep the states alive is their power. This situation shows that no state will change its priorities and use its resources for another unless it is compatible with its own interests and strategy. Thence, one of the prominent threats for a state is their dependence on another for their survival. The ends-means balance and consistent prioritization need to be calculated very carefully so that the situation of seeking help from another state does not arise.

The grand strategy includes all the power elements, and it is also related to the correct coordination of the resources and ensuring the ends-means balance. Another feature of the grand strategy that makes it “grand” is that it coordinates sub-strategies. A comprehensive and complex combination is achieved by building the interrelationship between all resources and power elements (Layton, 2012, p. 58). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a holistic perspective that addresses all dimensions and limitations of power (Brands, 2012, p. 11). The grand strategy ensures that the state is directed with all its might to its determined ends. Coordination between power elements will pave the way for achieving the goal.

Most of the calculations that states make before they act in foreign policy in line with their grand strategies are material. Ends-means balance, prioritization are still parts of the material account. In addition, the grand strategy needs arguments that will morally support the foreign policy behavior and have a multiplier effect. Argumentation has a prominent place in the grand strategy’s achievement of its ends and influencing both domestic and international public opinion. Today, many states propagate that their behavior is beneficial for the “common/global good” while justifying their foreign policies. The “anti-imperialist” attitude that the US shared with the international public in the Wilson Principles after the First World War, and the “democracy, liberalism, free market and open society” oriented argument after the Second World War are successful examples of argumentation. Furthermore, the belief that the steps to be taken will make the country safer and more prosperous should be presented to its citizens by the government. However, the importance of making arguments in terms of grand strategy is to calculate how the ideas to be put forward will be understood by each unit. Calculation errors in creating arguments may even lead to the blockage of grand strategy.

Although foreign policy is seen as a one-sided action by the state, it is a reciprocal movement that creates a reaction. Hereunder, international politics is the scene of the clash of grand strategies. The primary forces that clash over grand strategies are arguments. The strength of the argument that will support the grand strategy can wear down the counter grand strategy and affect its policies. In this respect, the important point in creating an argument is also about how the other party will perceive it. A successfully constructed and executed argument may undermine the opponent’s strategy.

While explaining importance of argumentation through grand strategy, it is key to mention the dominant features. One of these dominant features is the operation and execution of grand strategies in peacetimes. In wartimes, the weight of grand strategy will undoubtedly be on military strategy, but in peacetimes, which is generally longer processes, arguments drive the actual conflict. In other words, although there are interactions that bring great changes before and after wars, peacetime, which we can consider as non-conflict in the long run, is broader and the struggle in these large peacetimes is given over arguments. It is possible to identify this vital position of argument making as public diplomacy and soft power within the discipline of International Relations. With the development of communication technologies, the field of public diplomacy enables states to conduct international public relations and is used by states with the desire to create attraction, which is the basis of soft power. While the states aim to influence the power by creating a positive image and attraction on other peoples, of course, they do this by benefiting from the arguments of their own grand strategies.

There are many variables that affect the security environment, the evolution of which is complex and nonlinear (Danzig, 2011, p. 15). For this reason, grand strategies cannot be expected to identify all targets, opportunities, and threats all at once or quickly. At this point, where the dynamism and flexibility features become more vital, the most important studies that should be implemented before the phase of foreign policy making of grand strategies should be on scenarios. Scenarios should be created in order to reduce the uncertainty of

the developments ahead and to consider the possible future in the creation of a grand strategy with a long-term nature (Doğan, 2016, p. 160). At this juncture, the field knowledge, intelligence activities and academic knowledge of the states can be decisive. The success of the scenarios to be established for the ends determined within the framework of the grand strategy is based on the depth of knowledge and policy making experience. Thereby, it is possible that the information produced especially in the field of academia will contribute to the states as scenarios about the possible future. Although the target has been determined in terms of grand strategy, since it is possible to encounter problems on the way to the target, states need scenarios and plans that will enable them to advance towards the same target.

“No ‘grand strategy’ will remain unaffected by the unforeseen” (Gaddis, 2018, p. 308) so the success and quality of a grand strategy depend on its foresight ability. Creating scenarios for the development of this ability is a method that needs constant attention. On the other hand, the knowledge to be achieved and the ability to be developed through scenario creation are also related to academics, not just the government’s foreign affairs bodies. The state should pay attention to the contribution of studies in the field of International Relations to the grand strategy.

After the state, which creates its grand strategy, determines its targets, threats, which ones are of priority, what power elements will be coordinated in a ends-means balance for these, its arguments, and scenarios, it comes to foreign policy implementation. Foreign policy is the behaviour of states and takes shape in compliance with grand strategy. Grand strategy is rationalization, not an overt structure like foreign policy (Betts, 2019, p. 11). States implement their foreign policies within the framework of the logic indicated by the grand strategy. While examining International Relations, some foreign policies of states may seem inconsistent, but it should not be forgotten that this has a harmony and logic in its grand strategies. In summary, grand strategy identifies threats to the state; It designs political, economic, military and other remedies for these and prioritizes among all threats and remedies because in anarchic international system, national resources are not enough to fight all threats (Posen, 1984, p. 13). Ultimately, all the plans established find a place in international politics as a foreign policy.

### **The Importance of the Grand Strategy for the States**

States fight against each other in the international system to be safer, richer, and stronger. In this struggle, the grand strategy works for the states to make the existing balance better for themselves and to create power (Freedman, 2013, p. xii). Providing a vision to be followed consistently, if it is dependent on the realities of the day, is a successful step for the security of the states. “Grand strategy represents a roadmap delineating our most important foreign policy goals and the most effective instruments and policies for achieving those goals” (Schwenninger, 2003, p. 25). When viewed as a roadmap, the existence of a grand strategy is important to gain advantage within the system and to achieve foreign policy stability.

The change of heads of state does not mean that states will follow new foreign policies. In international politics, states follow a consistent and stable path according to their realities. Hence, the change of people is limited as a factor. Without a coherent grand strategy, policymakers cannot conduct an effective foreign policy (Milevski, 2016, p. 128). The grand strategy guides foreign policy ensures that policies is carried out in a stable manner even if new heads of state come. If the grand strategy is absent or ignored, foreign policy stability may be lost and thus state may remain uncertain about threats and ends.

Grand strategy, which is not a detailed guide to foreign policy making, is a compass pointing to policy makers’ priorities. The guidance provided by the grand strategy in foreign policy making also provides stability in the balance of use of means. States that change their ends in the short run may become increasingly wasteful in mobilizing their means. Such extravagance may lead to relative weakness and failure to survive.

A state that has formed its grand strategy with all its requirements will have more capable foresight in international politics where there are uncertainties. The grand strategy obliges states to constantly improve on their goals and the threats they will face. Therefore, one of the key elements in grand strategy is to look beyond

the current situation, prepare for the possibilities and take the necessary steps within the framework of the foresight but this function of “looking beyond” does not mean creating utopias. Increasing foresight capability gives states the chance to explore potential conflict areas. As mentioned before, when states determine their grand strategies, they reveal what kind of world they dream of and the necessary ends for this. On the other side, the states that will harm the form desired to be given to the international system and the ends pursued are also determined. In short, grand strategy shows who the enemy is and what can be done against this enemy. In this respect, a state that follows a grand strategy will have the opportunity to be prepared.

The dynamic and flexible grand strategy will create space for establishing new policies against new situations and unaccounted developments (Brands, 2014, p. 10). Identifying the enemy and finding its weak points are among the aims of the grand strategy (Hart, 1991, p. 212). In this respect, grand strategy gives the state intuitive power within the international system (Krasner, 2010, p. 5). The grand strategy is also important for the enemy to deviate from its own ends, in other words, to abandon its grand strategy (Stoker, 2010, p. 405). Accordingly, it is a great advantage for states to be able to take intuitive and stable steps regarding the international system by guidance of grand strategy.

### **Conclusion**

J. L. Gaddis is one of the academics from whom we can get the best answer on what a grand strategy is. Gaddis used the hedgehog-fox metaphor of I. Berlin in the explanations about grand strategy. “Hedgehogs, Berlin explained, ‘relate everything to a single central vision’ through which ‘all that they say and do has significance’; foxes, in contrast, ‘pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some de facto way’” (Gaddis, 2018, p. 4). Another important explanation Gaddis brought about grand strategy is the classification of grand strategists with whom these metaphors are associated. Positive liberty has been hedgehogs trying to herd foxes: the older Pericles, Julius Caesar, Augustine, Philip II, George III, Napoleon, Wilson, and the twentieth-century totalitarians, all of who offered ranges of “freedoms” extending from disillusionment to extermination (Gaddis, 2018, p. 310). “Negative liberty has been foxes with compasses: the younger Pericles, Octavian Caesar, Machiavelli, Elizabeth I, the American Founders, Lincoln, Salisbury, and especially Roosevelt, all of whom had the humility to be element of what lay ahead, the flexibility to adjust to it, and the ingenuity to accept, perhaps even to leverage, inconsistencies and they respected topographies, crafted choices within them, and evaluated these carefully once made” (Gaddis, 2018, p. 310-311). In reference to this classification and its statement, the grand strategy should be realistic, flexible, and balanced, as presented as features at the beginning of this study. Within the framework of this requirement, leaderships that allow polyphony will benefit from more intelligence as they can listen to more ideas. There is no doubt that a grand strategy that uses more intelligence will be better constructed.

The second purpose of this study, after developing an explanation of the concept of grand strategy, is related to the concept’s place in International Relations. The grand strategy literature, which consists of aphorisms and myths, has been introduced with explanations engaged in International Relations with this study. Beyond that, a model for research is presented with a discussion on both the sources and stages of the grand strategy. It is necessary to reach a richer literature by increasing and discussing the findings on the grand strategy. This requirement is also important for the future of the International Relations discipline. So much so that one of the fields with the greatest gap between its academy and practice is International Relations. In other words, while studies in engineering or medicine can have an impact on industrial production, this is very limited in social sciences and especially in International Relations. Consistent work on the grand strategy can help states both in policy making and in advancing with the target. This will be an answer for International Relations academics regarding what research is for. Studies on the grand strategy will make the desired result and primary goal visible beyond the short-term attitudes of the policies of the states. Therefore, grand strategy analysis should take place in International Relations by creating models and methods just like foreign policy analysis. If the foresight ability will be provided by the studies on grand strategy is ignored, the discipline of International Relations will remain in the context of Political History studies.

In another respect, as mentioned in the first part, one of the sources that feed the grand strategy is the academic field and academic power. It is very important for states to benefit from the discipline of International Relations

at the point of establishing or solving long-term plans. International Relations academics will be able to contribute to the foresight ability of the state by examining the policies with multiple scenarios with their studies on grand strategy. The prominent position of academic power in the sustainability of other material power elements should be considered. Accordingly, for instance, the attractiveness of the U.S. for scientists, the fact that it has a large number of think tanks and its position in both natural and social sciences contribute to the sustainability of its superpower feature at the grand strategy level.

## References

- Baylis, J., Wirtz, J., Cohen, E. ve Gray, C. S. (2002). *Strategy in the Contemporary World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Betts, R. K. (2019). The Grandiosity of Grand Strategy. *The Washington Quarterly*, 42(4), 7–22.
- Black, J. (2021). *Dünya Tarihinde Askeri Strateji*. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları.
- Brands, H. (2012). *The Promise and Pitfalls of Grand Strategy. the USA*.
- Brands, H. (2014). *What Good Is Grand Strategy*. Cornell University Press.
- Clausewitz, C. Von. (1984). *On War*. (Michael Howard ve P. Peter, Ed.). Princeton University.
- Danzig, R. (2011). *Driving in the Dark: Ten Propositions About Prediction and National Security*. Center for a New American Security.
- Deibel, T. L. (2007). *Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doğan, N. (2016). Dış Politikada Grand Strateji Yaklaşımı ve 21. Yüzyılda Türkiye. IV. Avrasya Sosyal Bilimler Forumu, 156–164.
- Dueck, C. (2006). *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture and Change in American Grand Strategy*. the UK: Princeton University Press.
- Earle, E. M. (1948). *Makers of Modern Strategy Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Fontaine, R. ve Kristin, L. M. (2012). *Debating America's Future*. R. Fontaine ve L. M. Kristin (Ed.), *America's Path: Grand Strategy for the Next Administration içinde*. Center for a New American Security.
- Freedman, L. (2013). *Strategy: A History. the USA*: Oxford University Press.
- Gaddis, J. L. (1991). *Toward the Post-Cold War World*. *Foreign Affairs*, 70(2), 102–122.
- Gaddis, J. L. (2009). *What is Grand Strategy?* Karl Von Der Heyden Distinguished Lecture, Duke University.
- Gaddis, J. L. (2018). *On Grand Strategy. the UK*: Penguin Books.
- Gray, C. S. (1999). *Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back*. *Review of International Studies*, 25(1), 49–69.
- Hart, G. (2004). *The Fourth Power: A Grand Strategy for the United States in the Twenty-First Century*. the USA: Oxford University Press.
- Hart, L. B. H. (1991). *Strategy (2. bs.)*. the USA: Meridian.
- Howard, M. (2001). *Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century*. *Defence Studies*, 1(1), 1–10.
- Karal, E. Z. (1991). *Atatürk'ten Düşünceler (6. bs.)*. İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları.
- Kennedy, P. (1987). *Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 To 2000 The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. New York: Random House.
- Kennedy, P. (1991). *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kern, S. (1983). *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kimball, W. F. (1991). *The Juggler Franklin Roosevelt As Wartime Statesman*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Krasner, S. D. (2010). *An Orienting Principle for Foreign Policy*. *Policy Review*, (163), 3–12.
- Kupchan, C. A. (2003). *The End Of The American Era U.S. Foreign Policy And The Geopolitics Of The Twenty-First Century*. the USA: Vintage Books.
- Layton, P. (2012). *The Idea of Grand Strategy*. *RUSI Journal*, 157(4), 56–61.
- Martel, W. C. (2015). *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. the USA: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Milevski, L. (2016). *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought*. the USA: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan-Owen, D. G. (2020). *History and the Perils of Grand Strategy*. *Journal of Modern History*, 92, 351–385.

- Murray, W. (2011). Thoughts on Grand Strategy. W. Murray, R. H. Sinnreich ve J. Lacey (Ed.), *The Shaping of Grand Strategy Policy, Diplomacy and War* içinde (ss. 1–33). the USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Posen, B. R. (1984). *The Source of Military Doctrine*. the USA: Cornell University Press.
- Posen, B. R. (2008). *A Grand Strategy of Restraint*. M. A. Flournoy ve S. Brimley (Ed.), *Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy* içinde . the USA: Center for a New American Security.
- Posen, B. R. (2014). *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*. the USA: Cornell University Press.
- Reagan, R. (1988). *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington.
- Roxborough, I. ve Levy, Z. (2014). *The Flailing Hegemon: Managing U.S. Military Decline*. *Political Power and Social Theory*, 26, 107–145.
- Schwenninger, S. R. (2003). *Revamping American Grand Strategy*. *World Policy Journal*, 20(3), 25–44.
- Singer, D. J. (1961). *The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations*. *World Politics - Theoretical Essays*, 14(1), 77–92.
- Sinnreich, R. H. (2011). *Patterns of Grand Strategy*. W. Murray, R. H. Sinnreich ve J. Lacey (Ed.), *The Shaping of Grand Strategy* içinde . the USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Slaughter, A.-M. (2012). *A Grand Strategy of Network Centrality*. R. Fontaine ve L. M. Kristin (Ed.), *America's Path: Grand Strategy for the Next Administration* içinde . Center for a New American Security.
- Snyder, J. L. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*.
- Spykman, N. J. (1942). *America's Strategy in World Politics The United States and The Balance of Power*. the USA: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Stoker, D. (2010). *The Grand Design*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thucydides. (2009). *The Peloponnesian War*. (P. J. Hammond, Martin Rhodes, Ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. the USA: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Yarger, H. R. (2006). *Strategic Theory For The 21st Century: The Little Book On Big Strategy*. Strategic Studies Institute.