

Thoughts on Strategy Formulation

Strateji Oluşturmaya Dair Düşünceler

Yavuz TÜRKGENCİ*

Abstract

This article attempts to clarify and contribute to the formulation of strategy by highlighting its essential components and processes. Strategy is a bridge between political and tactical levels and should not be considered a plan. A classic strategy may consist of ends, ways, means, and risks. A five-stage process consisting of strategic analysis, definition of an end state, identifying means, designing the ways, and assessing the costs and risks can be used in strategy formulation. Yet, the addition of another two phases, which are assessment and management of strategy, is a must for contemporary strategy formulation. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to take strategy as a rigid formula. The context of a strategy will be changing based on the aim and the field in question. Other than the military and starting with business, many fields continue to use strategy formulation effectively.

Keywords: Strategy, Strategy Formulation, Plan, Ends, Ways, Means.

Öz

Bu makale, stratejinin temel bileşenlerini ve süreçlerini vurgulayarak stratejinin oluşturma sürecini açıklamaya ve bu sürece katkıda bulunmaya çalışmaktadır. Strateji, siyasi ve taktik düzeyler arasında bir köprüdür ama bir plan olarak düşünülmemelidir. Klasik bir strateji amaçlar, yollar, araçlar ve risklerden oluşabilir. Strateji oluşturmada stratejik analiz, nihai durumun tanımlanması, araçların belirlenmesi, yolların tasarlanması ile maliyet ve risklerin değerlendirilmesinden oluşan beş aşamalı bir süreç kullanılabilir. Ancak çağdaş strateji oluşturulmasında bu beş aşamaya iki aşamanın daha eklenmesi bir zorunluluk olarak görülmektedir ki bu iki aşama stratejinin değerlendirilmesi ve stratejinin yönetilmesidir. Bununla birlikte, stratejiyi katı bir formül olarak ele almak da hatalı bir tutum olacaktır. Stratejinin bağlamı söz konusu

* Ph.D., Independent Researcher, Istanbul, Türkiye. ORCID: 0009-0002-7656-1421, e-mail: dijitalstrateji02@gmail.com.

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amaca ve alana bağılı olarak deęişmektedir. Bařta iř dđnyası olmak üzere, askeri alan dıřındaki birok alanda strateji oluřturma sđreci etkin řekilde kullanılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Strateji, Strateji Oluřturma, Planlama, Amalar, Yollar, Aralar.*

Introduction

There is not a commonly agreed definition of strategy.¹ Throughout history, the meaning of strategy has changed. Before the Westphalia Treaty (1648)² and the French Revolution (1789), that is, before the emergence of the nation-state, a strategy was perceived as the use of military forces to achieve victory in a war. With the emergence of the nation-state, the contemporary definition of strategy started to shape.

Today, it is unfortunate to see the use of strategy incorrectly to define a game plan, a thinking system or a tactical-level action. Additionally, the concept of strategy is used to direct the perception to create mysterious, impressive, and prestigious effects on a target audience. These usages contribute to confusion about the use of the strategy and negatively affect the understanding of the true meaning of the strategy.

Studying the evolution of strategy throughout history may help to grasp the meaning of strategy better. The scholars working on strategy generally focus on three historical thinkers. These are strategy's triumvirate: Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Carl von Clausewitz. Thucydides tried to explain why wars broke out, why the tension between states escalated, and why the war was so difficult to end.³ Sun Tzu's work *The Art of War*⁴ describes how a leader should act, fight, lead, command, and control a battle.⁵ Unlike Sun Tzu, Clausewitz prioritized the direct approach rather than the indirect approach in his work named *On War*.⁶ Today, scholars continue to utilize some of the terminology created by Clausewitz, such as "centre of gravity", "fog of war", and "friction". Additionally, "War is a mere continuation of

¹ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, p. XI.

² Tayyar Arı, *International Relations and Foreign Policy*, MKM Publishing, 10. Edition, 2013, p. 39.

³ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, translated by Martin Hammond, Oxford World's Classics, 2009.

⁴ Sun Tzu, *On the Art of War*, (trans. Lionel Giles), Allandale Online Publishing, 2000.

⁵ Nathan K. Finney, *On Strategy: A Primer*, The Army University Press, 2020, p. 26.

⁶ Finney, *On Strategy*, p. 29.

policy by other means”⁷ is an important point that supports the contemporary definition of strategy.

The levels of warfare may also help to understand the contemporary meaning of strategy better. There are four levels of warfare. These are political, strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The political level consists of political decisions taken at the government level. Some of these decisions may include a declaration of war, deciding the political objective of war, defining national interests and threat level, and joining alliances. It is quite common for a government to issue a political directive at the start of a war stating similar decisions. These decisions need to be translated into actions. The strategic level will fulfil this task by acting as a bridge. To give an example from the military, the strategic level will put forward what needs to be done from a political-military perspective. In this respect, deciding on military objectives and tasks that will enable the achievement of political goals can be a good example. The next level will be the operational level. This level will decide the operational level objective and the actions needed to achieve this objective. The operational level usually covers pure military actions. Each action/battle at the operational level will constitute a tactical-level problem.

The strategy should not be considered as a plan. There are many unknowns at the beginning of strategy formulation. As a bridge between the political and operational levels, a strategy should make unknowns known, answer some questions and set the stage for the planners to start planning at the lower levels. At least, a strategy should define three basic parameters, namely the place, time, and amount of force (capabilities) to be used within the scope of a political directive. Based on these decisions, lower-level planners may start planning. Planning will be more deterministic and linear than strategy formulation in this context. Plans will help the implementation of the strategy. Therefore, it is a common application to formulate a strategy first and prepare a strategic-level plan for the execution of the strategy.

In fact, a strategy can be considered as a hypothesis. Strategy formulation has more of an art side than a scientific side. For example, while one leader may define an actor as a threat and securitize it, another leader may not accept this approach but define another actor as a threat and securitize that actor within the scope of Copenhagen School principles. The leaders usually decide intuitively by using their tacit knowledge. Each leader has different

⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, (trans. J. J. Graham), The Floating Press, New Zealand, 2010, p. 70.

tacit knowledge, emotions, bias, and reasoning methodology. The leader, which made the right decision, will be revealed after the execution of the strategy. It is not easy to confirm strategic-level decisions without execution. Collected data for preparing strategic decisions may only help increase the probability of the right decision. Therefore, the art side of strategy and the level of unknowns will direct us to accept it as a hypothesis. Naturally, this hypothesis should be proven during the execution of the strategy by collecting and analysing the necessary data. Yet, it has to be emphasized that the scientific side of the strategy is gathering pace with emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

Business leaders started to get inspiration from military strategy formulation in the 1960s.⁸ A company can be regarded as a nation-state. Each nation-state tries to eliminate threats, develop its interests, and accomplish a competitive edge in the international system by formulating strategies. A firm may use a similar approach to develop its interests, achieve an advantage, and follow a competitive strategy in the market. The market can be considered as the territory for the nation-state or military. A company usually prepares corporate, business, and functional strategies. From the military perspective, corporate strategy can be compared to political directive, business strategy to military strategy, and functional strategy to operational level planning. Planning in each function for a particular case such as marketing, finance or human resources, is similar to tactical planning. Similar to business, the concept of strategy continues to be used in other fields such as sports, education, and science. Everybody and every field need a strategy.

Some of the essential characteristics of strategy can be summarized as coverage of the long-term, focus on a goal, harmony among the elements, taking the adversary into account, and difficulty in making an assessment and managing. Based on these characteristics, it would be appropriate to consider the following principles, which have been learned through experience.

- The human brain is focused on tactical and short-term thinking. Conscious of this, the strategic thinking system should not be ignored.
- Foresight is the foundation of strategic formulation. The important thing is not to see and understand the problems of tomorrow. The

⁸ Robert F. Grattan, *Strategy Process*, University of the West of England, Bristol, 2002, p. 10.

most important thing is to see the future and to set up a game plan to achieve the end state.

- It is not easy to see the results during the execution of a strategy. However, educated and experienced experts can identify the results of the execution and can take necessary measures in advance.
- There must be harmony between the elements of a strategic thinking system. In this framework, harmony between the end state and the instrument of power and the concept should exist.
- A strategy has to be prepared with execution in mind. A strategy that is not executable cannot go beyond storytelling.
- Simplicity is the greatest strength in strategy formulation. The simple and precise formulation will facilitate coordination and execution.
- Formulation of a strategy on the paper may look well. However, if the executive authorities fail to adapt the formulation into execution, it can be disappointing.
- It is extremely rare for a strategy to be executed as planned. Keeping this in mind, strategists must constantly monitor the strategic situation, anticipate risks and should be able to make the necessary suggestions and corrections.
- As soon as the execution of the strategy begins, some challenges will be encountered and expected results may not be obtained. This does not mean that the formulation is faulty. Strategy formulation provides a chessboard based on a hypothesis for management and thinking.
- It should not be forgotten that the opponent or the enemy also has a strategy. Therefore, a strategy will encounter resistance (friction) during execution both by the opponent and other actors and for natural reasons. Strategists should take this into account during the formulation phase.
- Strategy formulation cannot be the same for every subject, field or function. Strategic thinking systems and formulation should be reviewed by considering the subject's characteristics and execution must be the primary concern.

If an organization does not have a strategy based on clear objectives, it may face essential problems. In this respect, the organization in question may face a chaotic environment, may not seize opportunities, and departments of the organization may not work in harmony or they may adopt different

approaches which may harm the organization. Naturally, this will negatively affect the morale and performance of the personnel. This may also cause the authority of leaders to be adversely affected. As a result, the chances of success of an organization without a strategy will not be high.

It may be concluded that strategy is a bridge between the political and the tactical levels (operative level), a roadmap between the current situation and the end state, and a study to achieve the end state using available resources. Considering that the term “strategy” is used in different fields, the methodology will be different based on the characteristics of the field in question and the goal of the strategy.

1. Process of Strategy Formulation

Arthur F. Lykke explained the concept of strategy with a formulation in his article, in which he defines strategy as the combination of ends, ways and means.⁹ His approach can be accepted as the classical definition of strategy, which is a framework and starting point for formulating a strategy. However, it would be a mistake to take this definition as a rigid formula. Strategists may adopt additional elements and topics, considering the aim of the strategy formulation and the characteristics of the field in question. Lykke’s approach can be used more or less in every field such as business, sports, banking, science, and education. Nevertheless, strategists should adopt the strategy formulation framework, considering the aim, characteristics of the field in question, and other issues.

Formulation of a strategy is a highly complex work. Strategists should factor in many parameters, variables, and assumptions; make complex analyses and take timely decisions. In this context, it is very easy to lose the essence of the strategy formulation and end up in the wrong direction, which will not meet the aim of the strategy formulation. Therefore, having a strategic logic that will help to keep the primary direction of the formulation is necessary. As a strategic logic, the strategists may define the current situation, the end state and problems that prevent achieving the end state. Solving these problems will be the main strategic logic. Another example can be formulating a strategy with logic just to disturb the adversary’s strategic approach.

The formulation of a strategy may follow a process with five phases. These phases are strategic analysis, defining an end state, identifying means,

⁹ Arthur F. Lykke Jr., “Defining Military Strategy”, *Military Review*, 69, 1989, p. 5.

designing the ways, and assessing the costs and risks.¹⁰ Yet, two phases, which are assessment and management of strategy must be added for contemporary strategy formulation. Before starting with these phases, strategists should define their two aims: the aim of the strategy formulation and the purpose to be achieved by the execution of the strategy. The aim of the strategy formulation can be to fight terrorism, achieve a national interest, enter a market or achieve a championship. For the aim to fight terrorism, the execution aim of the strategy can be achieved by eliminating the terrorists or controlling the people. Phases of the strategy formulation have been summarized as follows.

1.1. Strategic Analysis

Sun Tzu wrote, “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles”.¹¹ This saying emphasizes the importance of strategic analysis best. Strategic analysis will constitute a base for further work along the strategy formulation. Moreover, it is a critical framework to be used during the execution of the strategy. Therefore, strategists should be aware of the importance of strategic analysis.

Strategic analysis usually takes place in the strategy documents under the topic of the strategic framework. The most critical mistake made by the strategists is not being able to create the content of the situation analysis (strategic framework) according to the purpose of the strategy. In other words, they cannot draw the strategic framework correctly. Including a text that is not relative to the strategy’s aim in this section will affect the quality of the analysis. This may distract the strategists’ and the decision-makers’ attention towards the wrong direction. Naturally, as a chain reaction, this may adversely affect other phases of the formulation process. Some of the main issues that can be considered are as follows.

- 1) *Interests*: Interests are long-term basic needs or desires of an actor that will increase wealth and development and shape behaviours. Some of the interests may include security, wealth, and values. Keeping in mind that it is not easy to define them, interests should not be perceived as tangible objectives. They can be considered long-term definitions and ideals. Following the definition of

¹⁰ Steven Heffington, Adam Oler, David Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, National Defense University Press, 2019, p. 51.

¹¹ Sun Tzu, *On the Art of War*, p. 11.

interests, decision-makers should decide the importance of the interests. This decision will support further decisions on the means and resources to be assigned.

- 2) *Threats / Opportunities*: An actor may face a threat or opportunity which may affect his interests. A threat can be described as “intention X capability”.¹² Considering this description, threats can be classified into four categories. These are a threat, potential threat, risk, and not a threat. Opportunities may consolidate and develop interests. Strategists should pay attention to opportunities as well as threats.
- 3) *Assumptions*: Strategists should define some assumptions which cannot be verified the accuracy at the beginning of the formulation. They need to answer some questions and make unknowns known to formulate a strategy. These can be the opponents’ capabilities and intentions, the situation’s dynamics, and internal dynamics. Assumptions are essential parameters that will shape and direct the formulation of a strategy. Therefore, strategists should set up a system to monitor and confirm the accuracy of assumptions during the execution. Since there are more unknowns at the strategic level, the number of assumptions will be high.
- 4) *Definition of the problem*: A clear, understandable, and short definition of the problem should be made at the beginning of the formulation. So, all the personnel can concentrate on the same problem. An example of strategic level problem definition may include a summary of the current situation, interest, and threat/opportunity.
- 5) *Global Situation Analysis*: All the developments outside the domestic affairs of an actor in question should be included. Naturally, there are lots of developments. The experienced strategists will consider the developments in the area of interest, which are relevant to the aim of the strategy formulation.
- 6) *Internal Situation Analysis*: Internal situations may include the issues, such as the situation of instruments of power, their engagements, meaningful internal developments, and directives.

¹² Terry L. Deibel, *Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 143.

The culture and values of the actor will be essential factors in this analysis.

- 7) *Constraints*: These are the factors that limit both the formulation and the executions. Strategists should take into account some constraints, such as time and finance.
- 8) *Methods*: Strategists may use some methods such as SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) system approach,¹³ and five-ring analyses. While strengths and weaknesses are internal, opportunities and threats are external. Threats can be eliminated, opportunities can be developed, and weaknesses can be balanced with strengths. A lot of things can be considered as a system. Strategists can analyse the system and define sub-systems, knots, and relations between knots and sub-systems. They may use these findings to exploit, attack, defend, concentrate, or for other purposes. Defining the centre of gravity of a system may help the formulation. Five-ring method¹⁴ is another system approach. Like the human body, every system includes management (brain), vital inputs (oxygen), infrastructure (blood vessels), population (cells), and defence (immune system). Strategists may understand a system by grouping the system into these sub-systems.

1.2. Defining End State

The end state is the objective that is thought to be achieved as a result of the execution of the strategic formulation. Deciding “what to do” is more important than “how to do”. If the strategists cannot decide “what to do” or the end state properly per the aim of the strategy formulation, then the direction of strategy formulation will be wrong at the very beginning and the question of “how to do” will lose its importance. In a situation where it can be accurately determined “what to do”, even if there is a problem with “how to do”, there will be time and an opportunity to make corrections. On the contrary, it will be challenging and will negatively affect the strategy formulation.

Decision on the end state is necessary to reveal the art side of strategy formulation. If we accept the strategy as a bridge between the current state

¹³ *Planner's Handbook for Operational Design*, The USJFCOM Joint Doctrine Division, 2011, p. IV-6.

¹⁴ Finney, *On Strategy*, p. 79.

and the desired end state, formulating the chain of objectives starting from the desired end state backwards to the current state can be relatively easy. Considering that an actor may have multiple strategies and sub-strategies, decisions on the end state and chain of objectives will be significant. Suppose the strategists cannot pay the necessary attention to the process of defining the end state. In that case, the objectives of all strategies may be intermingled by causing undesired effects on each other.

Strategic logic dictates defining interests, assessing threats and opportunities, which affect the interest, and deciding on an end state, which will eliminate the threat or develop the opportunity.¹⁵

1.3. Identifying Means

Defining the means to achieve the strategic objectives, which will produce the political aim, is another crucial phase of the strategy formulation process. Actually, the means constitute the power of an actor or an organization. It seems logical to accept that there are three components of the means. These are the elements of power, institutions/actors, and instruments of power.¹⁶ The number and characteristics of these components would change based on the characteristics of an actor or organization. If it is a nation-state, elements such as geography, human capital, economy, infrastructure, government, and culture can be the main elements of power. As for the institutions/actors, governmental organizations, ministries, departments, and international organizations come to mind first. Some individuals such as special representatives, artists/actresses or ex-presidents can be as powerful as institutions. Nation-states' instruments of power are Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economy (DIME). Finance, Intelligence, and Law Enforcement can be added to this list (DIME-FIL).¹⁷ The elements and number of the components can be changed. New elements such as the healthcare system can be added or created. The Institutions/actors use the elements and instruments of power to create desired effect to achieve the strategic goal. Elements of power have potential energy, but they alone cannot create the desired effect to achieve the strategic objective. An institution/actor should mastermind how to use

¹⁵ Deibel, *Foreign Affairs Strategy*, p. 281.

¹⁶ Heffington, Oler, Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, p. 19.

¹⁷ Cesar Augusto Rodriguez, Timothy Charles Walton, and Hyong Chu, "Putting the "FIL" into "DIME" Growing Joint Understanding of the Instruments of Power", *Joint Force Quarterly*, vol 97, 2nd Quarter, 2020, 121-128.

elements of power through instruments of power. So potential energy of elements can be converted to kinetic energy, which will create desired effect to achieve the strategic objective.

Means can be defined differently for other fields such as business, science, sports, and education. The logic of setting up means may stay the same. For example, finance (element), operation department (institution), and stock exchange (instrument) can be brought together to create a strategic level desired effect for a bank. This example can be adapted to other fields.

Strategists should be able to assess the means and decide if they have enough capability to create the desired strategic effect. As a result of this assessment, they may decide to create new means and develop or sustain their capabilities. Therefore, they should be able to visualize the characteristics of the new means or plan how to build new capabilities and sustain the owned capabilities. This process must be regarded as an essential part of strategy formulation.

1.4. Designing Ways

Designing ways is one of the most challenging problems in strategy formulation. Strategists try to achieve a strategic end state by employing means available properly, considering defined interests. Given the limited resources, strategists must make exact calculations. The fact that the means are engaged in more than one objective or used in the execution of other strategies can increase the problem's difficulty. They should accomplish this task horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, the strategists should be able to bring together the means and the objectives within strategic logic. Vertically, they must be able to draw a framework by which tactical tasks at the lower levels can be synchronized to achieve strategic objectives through operational art. It is not easy to accurately calculate what will happen at the strategic level over a long period of time. Additionally, the effect of fog, friction, and chance is much higher than the lower levels. Also, VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) is more effective strategically than lower levels. Because strategy is a bridge between the political level and the execution, strategists must deal with political and executive effects and problems. Therefore, good education and experience are necessary to design ways properly.

Suggesting a methodology for designing ways is not easy. Some famous ways (or concepts) are containment, forward defence, and forward

presence.¹⁸ These concepts usually consist of main objectives and forces. Operational and tactical levels develop the concept and plan the execution in detail following the strategic objectives. Defining priorities, essentials, principles, centre of gravity, phases, line of approaches, main line of approach, decision points, and strategic intent can make the life of strategists and lower-level planners easier. Collaborative planning with other echelons will definitely contribute positively to the strategic formulation.

Some examples of strategic approaches are observing, compromising, shaping, persuading, enabling, assuring, deterring, coercion, and eradicating.¹⁹ The strategic approach may change with the phase of the execution. It is easy to predict how the events will unfold in the beginning. But it will be tough to predict the long-term developments. Additionally, it is complicated to anticipate the opponents' and other actors' reactions in the long term. Therefore, it can sometimes be safer to design a strategic approach broadly. Tactical and operational level planning may help to fill the gap and periodic assessments may help to adapt the execution to the conditions of the current situation.

1.5. Assessing Costs and Risks

Costs and risks must be appropriately assessed both at the beginning of formulation and during the execution of the strategy. The aim of the assessment at the beginning of the formulation is to confirm that there is a balance and harmony among the ends, ways, and means of the formulation.²⁰ Otherwise, it will pose a risk. There is another risk that is often overlooked. This is the risk of the strategy. Undesirable effects may occur as a result of the execution of the strategy.²¹ Therefore, strategists should calculate two types of risks during the formulation and present these risks to the strategic-level decision-makers. Assessment of costs and risks should continue during the execution. Strategists need to design a system to assess costs and risks. There is not an agreed system of assessment of costs and risks. Strategists should create the system based on the aim and the characteristics of the strategy in question.

¹⁸ Finney, *On Strategy*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Joint Doctrine Note 1-18, Strategy*, 25 April 2018, p. III, 2, 3. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_18.pdf

²⁰ Lykke, *Defining Military Strategy*, p. 6.

²¹ Heffington, Oler, Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, p. 6.

1.6. Assessment of Strategy

It is complicated for strategic-level decision-makers to monitor and evaluate the execution of the strategy. Strategists may help them by setting up a system of assessment. The main elements of the system can be the Measurement of Strategic Effect (MSE), Measurement of Tactical Level Performance (MTP), and Measurement of Resources (MR). MSE will answer the question “If we do the right thing?”. In other words, MSE seeks to find out whether strategists defined the right strategic objectives. MTP will answer the question “If we do things right?”. This means that MTP seeks to find out whether the tactical level executes the tasks properly. Lastly, MR will answer the question “If we have enough resources?” or “Do we have to develop our resources?”. Strategists can set up a reporting system and define these parameters to help strategic-level decision-makers. Yet, strategic-level decision-makers can also utilize their intuitive decision-making abilities.

1.7. Management of Strategy

The management of strategy is another parameter overlooked in strategy formulation. Strategists should set up another system for the management of the strategy. A system based on an OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act) loop²² can be beneficial in this respect. The one who executes this loop faster than the opponent will create strategic paralysis in the opponent. A system consisting of the phases of the OODA loop and a battle rhythm will be advantageous. Very briefly, the battle rhythm will be a schedule with the time of the meetings and the name of the groups which will hold them.

Conclusion

Defining strategy as a bridge between the political level and execution or tactical level will contribute to formulating a good strategy. For this reason, strategists should be able to address and solve problems at the tactical and political levels. Although the use of the term strategy started as a military term, today it is widely used in many fields and especially in business.

The formulation of a strategy may follow a process with five stages. These are strategic analysis, defining an end state, identifying the means, designing the ways, and assessing the costs and risks. Yet, two phases, which are assessment and management of strategy, must be added for the contemporary strategy formulation. Naturally, strategy formulation should be adapted to the needs of the field in question.

²² Finney, *On Strategy*, p. 71.

Two essential conditions for the success of a good strategy are the appropriate end state and superior resources or elements of power.

Geniş Özet

Bu makale, strateji oluşturma sürecini açıklamayı ve bu sürece katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Strateji teriminin kullanımı askerî bir terim olarak başlamış olsa da günümüzde başta iş dünyası olmak üzere birçok alanda yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Stratejiyi politik düzey ile taktik düzey arasında bir köprü olarak tanımlamak iyi bir strateji oluşturulmasına katkı sağlayacaktır. Ancak siyasi ve taktik düzeyler arasındaki bu köprü bir plan olarak düşünülmemelidir. Bu nedenle stratejistler taktik ve politik düzeydeki sorunları ele alıp çözebilmelidir.

Strateji formülasyonu boyunca yapılacak çalışmalar stratejik analiz için bir temel oluşturacaktır. Dahası, stratejinin uygulanması sırasında kullanılacak kritik bir çerçevedir. Bu nedenle stratejistler stratejik analizin öneminin farkında olmalıdır.

Stratejik analiz genellikle strateji belgelerinde stratejik çerçeve başlığı altında yer alır. Stratejistlerin yaptığı en kritik hata, durum analizinin (stratejik çerçevenin) içeriğini stratejinin amacına göre oluşturamamaktır. Bu durum stratejistlerin ve karar vericilerin dikkatini yanlış yöne çekebilir. Bu süreçte dikkate alınması gereken başlıca konular şunlardır.

- **Menfaatler:** Çıkarlar, bir aktörün refah ve kalkınmayı artıracak ve davranışları şekillendirecek uzun vadeli temel ihtiyaçları veya arzularıdır. Çıkarlardan bazıları güvenlik, zenginlik ve değerleri içerebilir. Menfaatlerin tanımlanmasının ardından karar alıcılar menfaatlerin önemine karar vermelidir. Bu karar, tahsis edilecek araç ve kaynaklara ilişkin daha sonraki kararları destekleyecektir.
- **Tehditler / Fırsatlar:** Bir aktör, çıkarlarını etkileyebilecek bir tehdit veya fırsatla karşılaşabilir. Bir tehdit “niyet X kabiliyet” olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu tanım dikkate alındığında tehditler dört kategoride sınıflandırılabilir. Bunlar tehdit, potansiyel tehdit, risk ve tehdit olmaması olarak tanımlanabilir. Fırsatlar çıkarları pekiştirebilir ve geliştirebilir. Stratejistler tehditler kadar fırsatlara da dikkat etmelidir.
- **Varsayımlar:** Stratejistler formülasyonun başında doğruluğu teyit edilemeyen bazı varsayımları tanımlamalıdır. Bir strateji formüle etmek için bazı soruları cevaplamaları ve bilinmeyenleri bilinir hale getirmeleri gerekir. Varsayımlar, bir stratejinin

formülasyonunu şekillendirecek ve yönlendirecek temel parametrelerdir. Bu nedenle stratejistler, uygulama sırasında varsayımların doğruluğunu izlemek ve teyit etmek için bir sistem kurmalıdır.

- Sorunun tanımı: Formülasyonun başında sorunun açık, anlaşılır ve kısa bir tanımı yapılmalıdır. Böylece tüm personel aynı sorun üzerinde yoğunlaşabilir.
- Küresel Durum Analizi: Söz konusu aktörün iç işleri dışındaki tüm gelişmeler dahil edilmelidir.
- İç Durum Analizi: İç durumlar, güç araçlarının durumu, angajmanları, anlamlı iç gelişmeler ve direktifler gibi konuları içerebilir. Aktörün kültürü ve değerleri bu analizde temel faktörler olacaktır.
- Kısıtlar: Bunlar hem formülasyonu hem de uygulamaları sınırlayan faktörlerdir. Stratejistler zaman ve finans gibi bazı kısıtları dikkate almalıdır.
- Yöntemler: Stratejistler SWOT (*Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat*) sistemi yaklaşımı ve beş halkalı analizler gibi bazı yöntemler kullanabilirler. Güçlü ve zayıf yönler içsel iken, fırsatlar ve tehditler dışsaldır. Tehditler ortadan kaldırılabilir, fırsatlar geliştirilebilir ve zayıflıklar güçlü yönlerle dengelenebilir.

Klasik bir strateji amaçlar, yollar, araçlar ve risklerden oluşabilir. Strateji oluşturmada stratejik analiz, nihai durumun tanımlanması, araçların belirlenmesi, yolların tasarlanması ile maliyet ve risklerin değerlendirilmesinden oluşan beş aşamalı bir süreç kullanılabilir. Ancak çağdaş strateji oluşturulmasında bu beş aşamaya iki aşamanın daha eklenmesi bir zorunluluk olarak görülmektedir ki bu iki aşama stratejinin değerlendirilmesi ve stratejinin yönetilmesidir. Bununla birlikte, stratejiyi katı bir formül olarak ele almak da hatalı bir tutum olacaktır. Stratejinin bağlamı söz konusu amaca ve alana bağlı olarak değişmektedir.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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