

STRATEGIC FOREIGN POLICY PLANNING: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

СТРАТЕГІЧНЕ ЗОВНІШНЬОПОЛІТИЧНЕ ПЛАНУВАННЯ: КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНІ ОСНОВИ

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The article addresses the concept of strategic planning, attempting to investigate it within the foreign policy context. The relevance of the research is attributable primarily to the lack of modern works on the proposed topic, since the most significant works were developed in the last century, which substantiates the relevance and significance of the presented article. At the same time, the concept of strategic foreign policy planning has not been fully explored within the framework of political science and is insufficiently theorized, which also determines the relevance of this work. It was emphasized that in the absence of a theoretical base, it is impossible to effectively use strategic foreign policy planning as a tool for developing a foreign policy course, which, in turn, negatively affects the entire national security system of the state.

The author's theoretical formulation of the term is presented, original structure as well as main functions of strategic foreign policy planning are elaborated. It is concluded, that strategic planning is essential for effective foreign policy and thus for national security of a State.

Apart from that, the article provides the analysis two concepts that the author considers to be the cornerstone for understanding the process of strategic foreign policy planning: «strategic culture» and «strategic thinking». The article offers author's definitions of these multidimensional terms and describes the essential meaning of these concepts for strategic foreign policy planning and national security policy-making.

The results of the study allowed making conclusions that strategic culture and strategic thinking can be regarded as the basis or fundamental inputs for strategic foreign policy planning and national security policy-making. The author of the article insists that the introduction of these two concepts into the theory of strategic foreign policy planning will help increase the efficiency of the process itself, as well as facilitate the analysis of the foreign policy of other States. At the same time, the author emphasizes the fact that in the absence of theoretical framework it is impossible to effectively use strategic foreign policy planning as a tool for developing a foreign policy course, which, in turn, negatively affects the entire system of national security of the State. For a more complete understanding of the place of each of the elements considered in the article within the strategic process, the author's integrated picture is proposed in the article.

Key words: strategic planning, strategic culture, strategic thinking, foreign policy, national security.

У статті розглянуто поняття стратегічного планування та зроблено спробу дослідити його у зовнішньополітичному контексті. Актуальність дослідження зумовлено першочергово відсутністю сучасних праць за запропонованою темою, оскільки найбільш значущі роботи були розроблені в минулому столітті, чим обґрунтована актуальність та значимість представленої статті. Разом з тим, поняття стратегічного зовнішньополітичного планування не повною мірою досліджено в рамках політичної науки та недостатньо теоретизовано, що також зумовлює актуальність даної роботи. При цьому наголошено, що за відсутності теоретичної бази неможливо ефективно використовувати стратегічне зовнішньополітичне планування як інструмент вироблення зовнішньополітичного курсу, що, у свою чергу, негативно впливає на всю систему національної безпеки держави.

У статті розглянуто два поняття, які авторка вважає наріжними для розуміння процесу стратегічного зовнішньополітичного планування: «стратегічна культура» та «стратегічне мислення». Запропоновано авторські визначення цих багатовимірних термінів та наголошено на суттєвому значенні цих понять для стратегічного зовнішньополітичного планування та формування політики національної безпеки. Авторка статті наполягає, що впровадження цих двох понять у теорію стратегічного зовнішньополітичного планування сприятиме підвищенню ефективності самого процесу, а також зробить аналіз зовнішньої політики інших держав ефективнішим.

Відтак, за допомогою теоретичних методів, таких як аналіз, синтез, узагальнення та класифікація, у статті уточнено та запропоновано формулювання ключових термінів, представлено змістовно-структурну характеристику стратегічного зовнішньополітичного планування, визначено основні його параметри та розроблено його модель. Зазначено, що за допомогою різноманітних технологій, науково обґрунтованих методів аналізу та прогнозування стратегічне планування дає змогу визначити майбутню зовнішню політику держави з урахуванням потенційних викликів та загроз.

Зроблено висновок, що стратегічне планування має важливе значення для впровадження ефективної зовнішньої політики, а отже, і для національної безпеки держави, а відтак є ключовим елементом національної безпеки, від якого залежить ефективність її забезпечення.

Ключові слова: національна безпека, стратегічне планування, стратегічна культура, стратегічне мислення, зовнішня політика.

Introduction. Foreign policy is perhaps the most vital state function, and is especially significant within the national security context, since it is its integral element. An effective national security strategy aimed at satisfying state interests is impossible without sound foreign policy.

This is not least due to the ongoing formation of a new world order and the resulting international relations chaotization. This is reflected in such processes as the collapse of existing alliances and coalitions, and the formation of new ones – transregional –, such as obvious disrespect for international law and violation of international treaties, as well as the emergence of new political phenomena and megatrends.

At the same time, modern international relations are characterized by volatility, which makes them difficult to predict. In this regard, the process of foreign policy decision-making and national foreign policy formation rather is complicated. The multiple interconnectedness of global life gives an increasingly unrecognizable face to foreign affairs [2, p. 385].

An effective mechanism for foreign policy decision-making and implementation is one of the key conditions for an effective foreign policy. Strategic planning stands out as such a mechanism.

The concept «strategic planning» is traditionally the subject of research in military science, management, marketing, often researchers in the field of public policy also view this concept through the prism of its practical application, suggesting various methods of implementing strategic planning in one or another type of state activity, whether it be the economy, ecology, defence or foreign policy.

The term itself is being studied in great detail by business management researchers, among whom North American academics deserve particular attention, such as H. Mintzberg and his work «*The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning*», as well as «*Strategy Under Uncertainty*» written by H. Courtney, J. Kirkland, P. Viguerie.

It must be admitted that attempts have been made to describe the process of strategic planning in the sphere of foreign policy. However, it is worth noting that such works often evaluate the practical work of a particular authority or, for example, Ministry of Foreign Affairs department responsible for strategic planning. Among such works, the articles of Z. Brzezinski «*Purpose and Planning in Foreign Policy*» and L. P. Bloomfield «*Planning Foreign Policy: Can it Be Done?*», as well as S. P. Huntington's «*Strategic Planning and the Political Process*» providing a thorough analysis of State Department's S/P activities, are the most prominent ones.

It is noteworthy, that the most significant works on this topic were developed in the last century. This fact only increases the relevance of new investigations and the significance of the presented study.

At the same time, this term has not been fully investigated from a theoretical point of view within the framework of political science and in the context of foreign policy as a component of national security, determining the relevance of this study, which offers an original definition of the above concept. Herewith, **the purpose of the study** is to analyse the specifics of strategic planning in the field of foreign policy.

In this regard, the article discusses two concepts that are critical to understanding the essence of the strategic planning process: «strategic culture» and «strategic thinking». **The tasks of the study** thus is through theoretical methods such as analysis, synthesis, generalization and classification to:

- 1) suggest a formulation of the three terms: strategic culture, strategic thinking, strategic planning;
- 2) identify the main characteristics and features of each of the above phenomena;
- 3) clearly determine the meaning and role each of the phenomena plays for state foreign policy and national security;
- 4) develop a model of strategic foreign policy planning.

Strategic Culture

The strategic culture formation has to be an integral part of a state development process, as strategic culture is closely related to such fundamental tasks of a State as security, defence and sovereignty protection. Thus, strategic culture becomes the most important determinant of national security policy.

Strategic culture can be understood as a set of historically formed and inherited concepts, common beliefs that form the collective identity of a particular people, values that determine state interests and norms. They influence the State's choice of means to achieve its national goals. These constituent elements are the main factors influencing the behaviour of a State on the world stage.

In fact, the strategic culture is the basis which the main strategic documents and plans in the field of national security should be based on. Strategic culture makes it possible to avoid sporadicity and inconsistencies in public policy as well as in foreign affairs.

This term was first used in 1977 by an American political scientist J. Snyder in his report «*The Soviet Strategic Culture. Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*», prepared for the RAND Corporation. He compared Soviet and American nuclear doctrines, pointing out, that Soviet elites had a special way of thinking and a unique, different from the American, approach to developing key components of the doctrine. This approach, according to Snyder, was influenced by some geographical, historical, institutional and political factors [11, p. 38]. Strategic culture, thus, was represented as a set of ideas, emotional reactions, and patterns of standard behaviour, which are carried by members of the national strategic community.

C. Gray assumed culture as one of the factors that determine political choice and a corresponding model of behaviour. That is, Gray believed that any action was influenced by a particular cultural context [4, p. 27]. Referring to Snyder, Gray agrees that strategic culture stems from geopolitical, historical, economic and other unique factors. In his works, he argues that culture contains permanent ideas, views, traditions that are specific and typical for a particular security community, which has a unique histori-

cal experience. In addition, strategic culture(s) may change over time, but slowly.

J. S. Lantis, an American political scientist, later refuted this argument. In particular, he argued that strategic culture could be reformatted in the short term due to dramatic upheavals (revolutions, wars, economic catastrophes) – «strategic shocks», which discredit and destroy the existing system of values, norms and beliefs [5, p. 27].

Thus, strategic culture contains a system of values, based on which national security and foreign policy decisions are made, world perspectives are formed, views on army, war, alliances, other countries, new and old threats are shaped.

This study suggests determining *the factors* that influence national strategic culture formation:

1) *territorial and geographic*: geostrategic location of the country (size and territory configuration, physical and geographical features of borders, location in relation to the main international transport communications, a set of natural conditions); availability of natural resources and their accessibility;

2) *historical* (availability of historical experience of waging wars (expansionist/national liberation) and revolutions);

3) *political and institutional* (form of political regime, government and state system; the degree of effectiveness of the political system; the party system and the existence of political pluralism; the country's place in the system of international relations);

4) *military-strategic* (level of combat capability and combat readiness of the armed forces; level of development of the military-industrial complex; efficiency of the military training system);

5) *ethnic* (level of homogeneity and national consolidation of the nation; the presence and nature of internal interethnic conflicts; the main types of national self-determination in a multinational country);

6) *religious/moral* (main religions and denominations, their place and role in the political system of the country; the degree of ideological unity of the nation, the existence of «national idea» national and psychological characteristics of the population).

These factors form the national identity and worldview, which together with traditions, habits, and customs constitute a set of interests and preferences. Worldview creates a type of thinking, typical, in particular, for the individual and for a society in general. Thinking at the state level is manifested in strategic thinking, the result of which is the adoption of an adequate strategic decision. Strategic thinking is reflected in behaviour and influences the formulation of national interests, decision-making processes, goal setting and crisis response. That is, strategic thinking is the basis of the state strategic planning system, through which a State builds the main directions of national security policy. In other words, a certain type of thinking affects a certain pattern of behaviour, which is the embodiment of strategic culture.

Thus, strategic culture is a model of behaviour based on a certain type of thinking, worldview and traditions typical for a geographically defined security community, inherent in the political establishment of a State, responsible for defining national security goals, developing strategies to achieve them and implementing these strategies.

Strategic Thinking

The concept of «strategic culture» is closely related to the concept of «strategic thinking».

Thinking itself is one of the most complex scientific problems that psychologists, philosophers and culturologists work on, in particular, the question of determining its essential mechanisms, sources of activity and functioning, methods of development and functioning. According to the common definition, thinking means a cognitive process, a type of mental activity that consists in knowing and reflecting objective reality.

In the context of national security policy, «thinking» acquires a strategic dimension. This means that thinking is long-term oriented, as well as holistic, integrated. This conclusion is made in view of the fact that the strategy means a general idea, an integrated plan to achieve the desired goal (macro goals).

An American strategist and professor of business administration J. M. Liedtka (University of Virginia) presented a comprehensive vision of the category of «strategic thinking» as a combination of analytical and creative approaches. She developed a model of strategic thinking, which includes five elements: 1) a systems perspective or a mental model; 2) intent-focus; 3) thinking in time (understanding that the future is the result of the past, analysis and evaluation of past trends, strategies, mistakes in order to predict the future); 4) hypothesis-driven; 5) intelligent opportunism (the essence of this element is the idea of openness to new, innovative, alternative strategies).

Taken together, these five elements describe a strategic thinker with a broad field of view that sees the whole and the connections between its pieces, both across the four vertical levels of strategy and across the horizontal elements of the end-to-end value system [6, p. 124].

A Canadian academic and author on business and management H. Mintzberg argued that the essence of strategic thinking is intuition and creativity. According to Mintzberg, the result of strategic thinking should be an integrated perspective, a non-detailed vision of the main direction of development. The main function of strategic thinking according to Mintzberg is to create and implement an adequate and effective strategy [7, p. 107]. However, Mintzberg and his followers draw attention to the dual nature of strategic thinking (analysis and synthesis). Strategic thinking has been described as a mental process (both abstract and rational), which requires the ability to analyse and synthesize. If the analysis is needed to collect and comprehend data, the synthesis – to make a diagnosis

based on the collected data, to make a decision, which essentially comes down to choosing between options. Ukrainian researcher S. Tryhobyuk accepts this opinion, calling strategic thinking a special type of systems thinking that combines rational and creative components, objective and subjective aspects, based on certain principles, integrates various concepts and methods in a complex process strategic activities. Strategic thinking is the ability to think systematically, i.e. to take into account all possible perspectives, which often seem unattainable at first [14, p.720]. V. Ter-tychka also adds that strategic thinking is systemic thinking, i.e. seeing a complex system rather than individual facts, understanding the causes and consequences. Strategic thinking is actually a special type and approach in thinking about innovative systemic transforming of information in solving strategic problems [13, p.120].

This leads to the conclusion, that **strategic thinking is an intelligent technology or toolkit that allows one to design a substantial image of the future for the selected object (State, etc.)**. Strategic thinking is the design or conceptualization of state national security policy, which is important, long-term, and thus forms the basis of the state strategic planning system. The results of strategic thinking are strategic vision and macro-goal (end-state), the tool for implementation and achievement of which is planning. Strategic thinking should be aimed at imagining a State in the future and designing a master plan for state development that would ensure the realization of national interests, in other words – path-finding.

The process of strategic thinking is carried out within a strategic context, which can be described by the term VUCA: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity.

Uncertainty relates to skills in developing scenarios and strategic alternatives, risk assessment, and the ability to make decisions in the absence of information and knowledge or when the consequences of such decisions are ambiguous. Thus, effective strategic thinking requires not only logic and discipline in the use of adequate analytical tools, but also intuition, intellectual flexibility and resilience.

At the core of strategic thinking – thinking about the future, identifying opportunities, developing global megatrends, analysing and evaluating the results of strategic research (expert opinions, forecasting, modelling, etc.). Strategic research can be both a starting point for strategic thinking, as it should be conducted regularly, and its result, i.e. conducted on demand, when there is a need for additional research. Consequently, a clarity for policy strategic tasks formulation emerges (how to achieve the desired future (over a period of time – time horizon)), possible options for achieving the desired future and the choice is made in favour of the most beneficial. Thus, a strategic decision is made, which is reflected in the strategic cul-

ture and implemented through strategic planning – the development of operational and tactical objectives to achieve macro-goals – and strategic management – the direct implementation of the plan. Understanding management results (successes and failures) will lead to new strategic reflections.

One of the sources of strategic thinking is strategic knowledge and experience. Strategic knowledge in this context means a body of knowledge in the field of international relations and international security, world economy, as well as foreign policy analysis, which will allow forecasting global development and foreign policy trends.

The strategic thinking of the political elite is always based on cultural and historical context. Each nation in the course of its historical development forms a unique mentality, accumulates value orientations, thoughts, beliefs that determine the content of individual and collective consciousness and are expressed in the peculiarities of thinking. The political elite extrapolates these features in policy-making and decision-making. Thus, the role of strategic thinking in the development and implementation of national security policy, especially in the field of foreign policy, as well as in the system of state planning and management is extremely important.

An effective foreign policy is impossible without strategic thinking. Foreign policy as a tool for the realization of national interests has to be supported by a holistic vision of the future, an understanding of the further development of the strategic environment, consisting of States, sometimes with conflicting goals and interests. The nature of relations between allies and rivals, the beginning of conflicts or the establishment of peace, and sometimes the existence of a State, depend on the decision to interact with the strategic environment.

Strategic culture and strategic thinking are inputs for strategic planning. Based on the cultural and historical context that accumulates strategic culture and the results of strategic thinking, a vision (strategic vision) and macro-goal (end-state) of foreign policy is formed, which in turn reflects the desired future of a State. In combination with the analysis and evaluation of the results of strategic research, it becomes possible to specify the strategic objectives of foreign policy, which are answers to the question of how to achieve macro-goals and implement the vision.

Strategic Planning

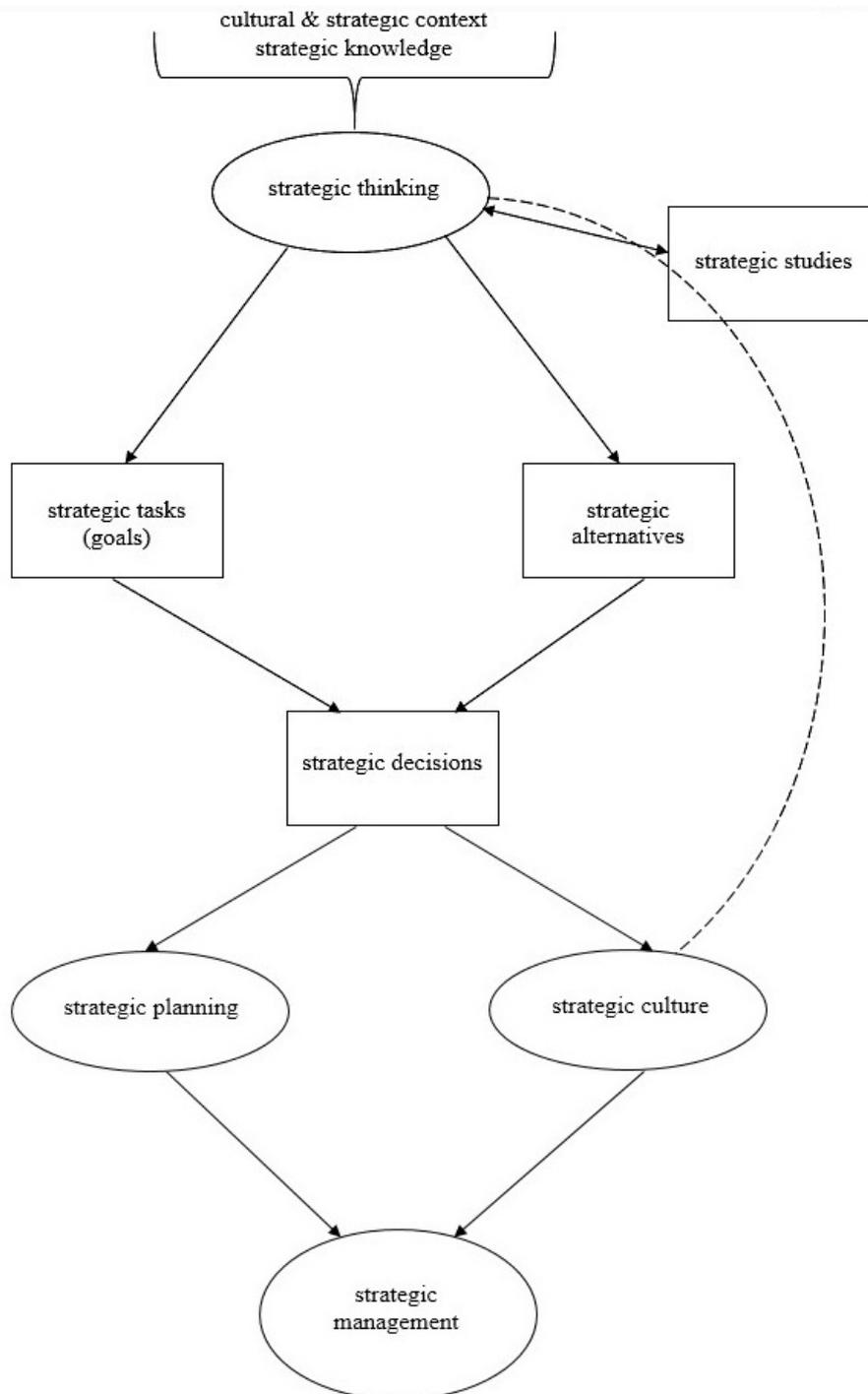
In its most pure form, planning is an intellectual activity as it involves strategic thinking. Strategic planning is a way of thinking about the future, thinking about national objectives and interests, thinking about the environment, which is likely to be faced in pursuing the objectives, and projecting alternative environments, and thinking about ways to achieve the objectives – developing a strategy, a course of action. Thus, *the purpose* of foreign policy planning is to fuse thought with action [3, p. 52], in other words, to cre-

ate a foreign policy strategy, resulting from strategic thinking supported by strategic studies and based on strategic cultural context (Picture 1).

Strategic planning does not necessarily implies long-term planning. One calls policy-planning process strategic when strategically important political tasks are being addressed.

In terms of foreign policy, however, strategic planning can be equated with mid-/long-term planning due to volatility of international relations, as well as

due to power alternation. Most governmental officials hold their positions for relatively short periods of time and tend to have «planning horizons» that generally correspond to the amount of time they expect to hold their present jobs. Every new administration sets new foreign policy objectives, for which a strategy is needed in order to accomplish them. At the same time, the continuity and evolution of these tasks is also allowed. Consequentially, *the basic function of planning in foreign affairs is design.*



Picture 1

The strategic foreign policy planning process has a specific *structure*. This study suggests a 7-step model of a strategic foreign policy planning model.

Firstly, it starts with *indicating values*. The next stage would be *identifying key national interests* within the foreign policy context. Z. Brzezinski emphasizes, that interests are more clearly defined by established traditions, the limits of geography, and relatively modest resources. Historical continuity and clearly definable priorities allow a more precise definition of fundamental principles. They provide a conceptual framework within which the policy planner operates, permitting to focus on what is centrally important [3, p. 52].

The third step would be *stating goals and objectives* reflecting the vision (usually provided within the National Security Strategy) and conforming to the national interests as well as defining methods of their achievement. It is noteworthy that goals and objectives must meet the S.M.A.R.T criteria among which «R» – relevant / realistic – is the most important one.

Like any other intellectual process, strategic planning can be viewed as a process of problem solving. As such, it suggests selecting and formulating a problem, gathering and sifting relevant data, developing hypothetical solutions, and concluding with the best solution. Thus, the fourth step is *diagnosing problems* that may hinder attaining the proposed goals and possible challenges that may emerge. Strategic planning is always action-oriented. Therefore, strategic problems should be formulated as tasks that can be done by a State, its institutions and organizations.

The fifth step would be *strategic studies analysis*, which provide international relations perspective development forecast, as well as variants of alternative developments – this step can be titled as «*strategic alternatives analysis*». The most desirable variant of the foreseeable future is also assessed. Ukrainian researchers V. Horbulin and A. Kachynskyi point out that strategic planning helps to improve the decision-making process. To get the best results, strategic planning requires broad but effective gathering of information, development and study of strategic alternatives, and increased attention to strategic risks associated with strategic decision-making [10, p.17].

The analysis results in *selecting possible actions* for each forecast variation suggested. The process ends up with the *formalization of foreign policy strategy*.

An essential element of the strategic planning is a regular analysis of strategy's implementation progress, what L.P. Bloomfield calls «post mortems» [2, p. 389]. These should be conducted in order to provide a more systematic learning experience that might throw new light on planning successes and failures.

Of course, there is hardly a single right method for strategic planning. Instead, there are a variety of techniques and tools available to aid in systematically

thinking about the future and in organizing thoughts into a coherent plan of action. These tools range from simple intuition to complex mathematical models designed to assess the impact of changes in hundreds of variables simultaneously.

W. Ascher and W. H. Overholt are the authors of «*Strategic Planning and Forecasting: Political Risk and Economic Opportunity*» suggested an authentic structure of strategic planning model, which begins with definition of interests before the multi-faceted environment is examined. Moreover, this model reflects a complex view of alternative futures and the ways to deal with them, acknowledging that the future for a major actor ranges from the knowable (core environment) through the possible to the unpredictable (exogenous contingencies), all of which must be planned for. To satisfy the national interests in this multi-faceted environment requires a sophisticated three-part strategy. The core strategy consists of those actions that will satisfy the interests in the core environment – those things that can be controlled or expected to happen. The basic strategy consists of those actions designed to cope with either the most desirable or the most likely environment. Together, the core and basic strategy define the primary strategy. A hedging strategy, often dealing with less vital issues, is added to account for the environments not accounted for by the basic strategy and the exogenous contingencies [1, p. 31].

Olaf Helmer, an inventor of the Delphi method, fairly acknowledges that the future is no longer viewed as unique, foreseeable, and inevitable, instead it is realized that there are a multitude of possible futures, with associated probabilities that can be estimated and, to some extent, manipulated [9, p. 17]. Although the future is fraught with uncertainty resulting from inadequate knowledge and excessive complexity, strategic planning offers a framework for reducing or at least defining the uncertainties [15, p. 94]. Policy planning has to involve, to an important extent, the anticipation of future events. It thus has to rely on a reasonably accurate estimate of likely developments, both as provided by the intelligence community and as derived from analysis of trends. Planning, therefore, has a kinship to forecasting [3, p. 59].

«Planning is the tool to manipulate the future, and to acknowledge an array of possible future conditions», states J. H. Stewart II in his article «*Methods for Developing Alternative Futures and Long-Range Planning*». He introduced a concept of «alternative future» which he defined as a description of a possible future state of events relevant to the planning object [12, p. 50]. Stewart suggested six methods used to develop alternative futures: trend extrapolation, simulation modelling, cross-impact matrix analysis, the Delphi technique, scenario building, expert judgment and genius forecasting.

The uncertainty of future trends and events can, however, be reduced by either projecting several alternative environments or exploiting what is known about the development of past trends and events. To ensure that each projected alternative environment is realistic, each step in the chain of cause and effect from the present to the future must be described. That is, scenarios have to be constructed [15, p. 95]. It is increasingly possible for policy planners to make periodic assessments of longer-range political trends in key countries, and on that basis to construct alternative policy responses [3, p. 60].

It is mistaken, however, to expect a plan for every contingency. The number of theoretically possible crises in the years ahead is virtually infinite. The selection of contingencies for intensive planning has to be a matter of judgment.

G. A. Morgan in his article «*Planning in Foreign Affairs: the State of the Art*» suggests three kinds of foreign policy planning, chiefly long-range [8, p. 277]. One is a development of the socio-political implications of non-political changes. Some fields in economics, engineering and military technology afford relatively hard data supporting projections for five, ten or more years on which foreign policy planning can climb out into the years ahead, as it were, and go to work. Another kind of long-range planning is analysis of present forces or trends considered likely to determine the framework of some aspect of the future over an extensive period. Thence are derived courses of action, many of which should be started now in order to deal most effectively with the forces analysed and the problems they will tend to create. Planning of this type has evident value, and a great deal has actually been done. A third kind of long-range planning that has proven productive lies in creating a comprehensive philosophy and strategic concept for the national effort as a whole. Here the foreign affairs planner has a central contribution to make, although it extensively involves and must be coordinated with the thinking of social, economic and military planners.

The author of this study has developed the following *principles* of strategic political planning:

- 1) *consistency and balance*;
- 2) *integrity and complexity*;
- 3) *realism or adequacy* (planning cannot result in goals and objectives that are detached from reality, notably in terms of assessing the state resources available);
- 4) *multi-alternativeness* (which is also a means of reducing the level of uncertainty (unpredictability), increasing the validity of strategic decisions, as well as the basis for adapting the foreign policy strategy to changing conditions of external and internal environments with minimal losses);
- 5) *methodological and scientific quality* (strategic foreign policy planning is carried out using an evidence-based methodology, with due regard for its

continuous improvement, as well as using international experience in the sphere);

6) *completeness* (as a result of strategic planning, a completed and coherent plan should appear to achieve the defined goals – a strategy);

7) *effectiveness and efficiency* (the choice of means and methods of achieving foreign policy goals should ensure the achievement of planned results with the least expenditure of resources);

8) *verifiability* (the strategic plan should contain clear and measurable KPI for evaluating the results of its implementation);

9) *flexibility* (the strategy must be built on the «open architecture» principle, that is, implicitly contain the possibility of its renewal, improvement, addition; the strategy should be reviewed periodically based on novel ad hoc studies);

10) *transparency and legitimacy* (strategic planning in a democratic state is carried out on behalf of the society and for the sake of the society, therefore the planning process must be transparent and understandable for the citizens, as well as supported by them, consequently, strategic planning documents are accessible to the public).

Summarizing, **strategic planning can be defined as the process of analytical and synthetic activities, during which long/mid-term state goals and priorities (national security, foreign policy, etc.) are defined simultaneously with their implementation mechanism. Strategic planning aims at identifying possible futures, designing options and preparing responses for possible threats and challenges.**

The process of strategic planning allows to introduce elements of certainty about the perspective course of international relations, ensuring sufficient understanding of their development and providing alternatives to exert controlled influence on political processes, events and phenomena, being a means of overcoming foreign policy instability.

Conclusion. Various factors, including geographical, religious, historical, etc., form the national identity and worldview, which together with traditions, habits, and customs constitute a set of national interests and preferences. Thus, each State comes out to the international arena with its baggage of accumulated historical experience, beliefs, cultural influences of geographical and resource constraints and a unique worldview. Worldview creates a type of thinking, specific for an individual as well as for a people in general. Thinking at the state level is manifested in strategic thinking, the result of which is adequate strategic decision-making. Strategic thinking is reflected in behaviour of a State and influences the formulation of national interests, decision-making processes, goal setting and crisis response. That is, strategic thinking as an intellectual technology for designing the future of a State is the basis for

state strategic planning system, through which a State builds the main directions of national security policy and foreign policy in particular.

Strategic culture and strategic thinking are thus basic conditions for strategic planning, particularly in the field of foreign policy. Strategic foreign policy planning itself is the cornerstone of national security.

By means of various technologies, scientifically based methods of analysis and forecasting, strategic planning enables determining the future foreign policy of a State taking into account potential challenges and threats. Strategic planning is a tool that significantly increases the effectiveness of foreign policy, on which national security largely depends.

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