

STRATEGIES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING IN BULGARIA

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Abstract: *This report examines the importance of national strategy and strategic planning in Bulgaria, as well as the lack of a unified understanding of the terminology used by political leaders and the state administration regarding strategic planning in the Republic of Bulgaria. On the one hand, it highlights the absence of a national strategy for the Republic of Bulgaria, which could serve as a foundation for developing all other strategic documents: strategies, doctrines, concepts, and plans. On the other hand, it justifies the need for creating a unified model for the development of strategies and for the creation of a National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, which would serve as the cornerstone for the development of sectoral policies and strategies.*

In relation to identifying the necessity of creating a national strategy for the Republic of Bulgaria and designing an effective model for its formulation, the systems approach has been employed utilizing a cyclically reversed application of analysis and synthesis methods, grounded in systematic decomposition and aggregation, which together constitute the methodology of this article.

Keywords: *national strategy; strategic planning; goals; national power; policy.*

Introduction

In recent decades, Bulgarian political elites have been attempting, through copying various state-building models and experimenting with numerous political projects, to find the right formula to “lead” the country out of the perpetual crisis (mainly political) it finds itself in. Various strategies and projects have been created despite the lack of quality analysis and identification of the origin for this disunion of the Bulgarian nation. Separation caused by the inability of Bulgarian politicians to unite themselves around fundamental ideas, ideals, goals, and interests that could serve as the foundation for the so-called “grand strategy” of the state, or simply a “national strategy” and the ways in which these goals and interests can be realized through the achievement of national ideas and ideals. Doctrine and strategy or perhaps more accurately put, strategy first, with doctrine coming in second, as the core elements for the development and prosperity of the Bulgarian society. Moreover, in order to create and shape a unified understanding of the essence of strategy and doctrine, it is entirely reasonable to ask the question: who needs to form a unified understanding of the essence of strategy and doctrine? The answer is that it is necessary to build and apply a unified conceptual apparatus that would provide an accurate formulation of the meanings of the words *doctrine* and *strategy*. Therefore, as a precondition for forming working groups to develop a National (Grand) strategy, and in accordance with the term’s underlying definition, which as per Encyclopaedia Britannica is “a country’s most complex form of planning toward the fulfillment of a long-term objective” (Britannica n.d.), creating and executing a grand strategy involves the clear definition of a national objective, careful evaluation of the country’s available resources, and efficient organisation of such resources to achieve that goal. Whilst grand strategy applies to both wartime and peacetime, it has traditionally been shaped by the presence of an adversary that must be overcome. In response, policymakers work to craft an integrated national approach that combines, coordinates and

consolidates “military prowess, political leverage, diplomatic ability, and economic might within a cohesive national strategy” (Britannica n.d.). That is why it is more necessary than ever to examine and standardize the basic conceptual apparatus to help form a unified understanding of the following basic concepts: state, statehood, ethnicity, nationality, nation, people, national ideal, national interests, national goals, national power, strategy, doctrine, and more.

National (Grand) strategies have existed in the past and are particularly dominant in the history of the United States of America, with the Monroe Doctrine being a prime historical example of such a long-term and overarching strategy. Even today, the concept of the National (Grand) strategy is a consistent concept in both domestic and foreign US policy making and an active component of theoretical and practical debates in US policy, academic, expert and military circles. Although, there is no tangible and singular document expressing a US National (Grand) strategy, the policy directions, subservient to and encompassing what constitutes a Grand strategy, are present in all other strategic documents, policies and doctrines (Hooker 2014, 1-4, 21-27). Other examples, although incomplete in their final form, can also be found, such as the 2022 European Union Strategic Compass for Security and Defence and the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept, which definitively provide for a set of overarching grand objectives, but fall short in providing a long-term scope of implementation and strategic direction.

The effectiveness of any state, in comparison to other nation states in the international community, largely depends on its ability to understand how other countries develop and implement their internal and external policies. This involves more than just evaluating human and material resources. It also includes the capacity to influence or generate national power through strategic interactions with other nations-going beyond basic assessments of natural resources, technological skills, and industrial capabilities. Therefore, it concerns the understanding of the system and process through which these assets are utilized, and the resources that lead to stability or change in the national structure. Understanding the current effect of these factors is important, but determining their future impact with some degree of certainty is even more necessary.

The need for forming a unified understanding of the used terminology is driven by the fact that every individual citizen of modern society has its own understanding of his/her essence. For many, the strategy is reduced to personal survival, something that will happen in the near future. Every new government, new leader, etc., elaborates “new” strategies, copying various foreign models, claiming they have created the “perfect” strategy that would lead the country out of crisis, the company out of bankruptcy, improve the production process in a factory, etc. A confirmation of the misunderstanding of the meaning of the word *strategy* is provided by the explanation given by Prof. Todor Tanev, who stated that “when discussing the creation of a specific strategy, the area and spheres for which it is developed are considered, and the time period during which it will be implemented is fixed. Strategy shapes its behaviour now, in the present, with regard to the future vision you wish to achieve” (Tanev 2016, 8). Moreover, proof of this misunderstanding comes from all the proverbially named, yet not definitive in their goals, strategic documents published on the website of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers (Bulgarian Council of Ministers 2025). These serve as evidence of the stagnation in which Bulgarian society finds itself in its attempts to respond to the challenges it faces. As seen in the website, strategies are written much more frequently than during the “Cold War” because the total number of adopted and published strategic documents has reached two hundred and seventy-six. A significant portion of them were created to meet certain requirements provoked by the country’s membership in NATO, the EU, and the demands imposed by that membership. Many of these documents were developed to provide comfort or to create conditions for the imposition of corporate interests. Consequently, more and more attempts are being made to create strategies that are developed without the necessary knowledge and qualifications of their authors regarding strategic theory, and without conducting a thorough analysis and evaluation of the necessity to create a particular strategy.

Over the past thirty-plus years, despite numerous attempts to develop valuable strategies, they have failed to achieve the expected contribution and have provoked growing disappointment among citizens. The misunderstanding of what constitutes strategy turns almost all of them into overstretched non-binding plans. As mentioned earlier in the article, strategy is often developed by one person or a small group of people who do not necessarily possess required “competencies”. For instance, within the Defence Staff, there is an identifiable deficiency gap in knowledge about the framework strategies, such as National (Grand) strategy, when the fact that the Bulgarian National Security strategy is out of date was not taken into account when drafting the new Bulgarian National defence strategy (publicly released recently). Even more so, the absence of qualified expert opinion, objective knowledge and practical skills among strategy authors, has led to assessments of the internal and external security environment in an inappropriate way, which led to wrongful conclusions and forecasts about the development of global security. More precisely, such working collectives have persistently demonstrated an overarching lack of necessary education, knowledge, qualifications, and experience for developing strategies and doctrines brought. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of “strategic theory” and the absence of a fundamental (National) strategy are also obstacles to creating quality and effective supporting strategies or implementation plans.

The *object* of this study can be defined as the lack of a unified understanding of strategic theory and the absence of a fundamental (National) strategy that would enable the formulation of supporting strategies at the national level and the development of plans for their implementation. The *subject* of the study is the process of developing these strategies.

The *main goal* of the research is to reveal the necessity of creating a national strategy and a qualified expert team with the necessary knowledge and experience to develop strategies.

The *working hypothesis* of the scientific research reveals the need for the creation of a national strategy and the requirements toward the political elite of the Republic of Bulgaria to be provoked to unite around the development of such a strategy in laying the foundations for pulling the country out of the permanent perpetual political crisis, which is leading to economic, demographic, and other crises.

In relation to identifying the necessity of creating a national strategy for the Republic of Bulgaria and formulating an effective model for its formulation, the systems approach has been employed, utilizing a cyclically reversed application of analysis and synthesis methods, grounded in systematic decomposition and aggregation, which constitute the *methodology of this article*.

1. The Need for Creating Strategies

The logical next question follows: is it necessary to write National (Grand) strategy and National doctrine?

The answer to this question is clearly affirmative: yes, it is necessary to create them, but only those that represent a long-term vision, spanning at least twenty to thirty years into the future. The reasons for this thought are as follows:

- ✓ The assumption that strategies represent a “long-term plan for achieving an important goal, as well as the science and art of using the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations in order to ensure maximum support for adopted policies during peace or war” (Merriam Webster Dictionary n.d.).

- ✓ The development of strategies is often assigned to lower-level managers: tactical and/or operational, who do not possess (as mentioned above) the necessary knowledge and experience to work at a strategic level and are primarily experts in human resource management. The expertise these specialists have is the opposite of the expertise required to create strategies.

- ✓ The creation of strategies is handled by so-called “narrow specialists” (Tanev 2016, 9) in a particular area of state management for which the equivalent strategy is being developed. They do not have the necessary preparedness regarding the strategic architecture and compensate for this lack with

improvisations based on their general managerial culture. An example of such behaviour is the development of the “Updated National Security Strategy” in 2018 (Bulgarian Council of Ministers 2010).

- ✓ The use of power tools to exert influence and control over the process of developing and the content of strategies.

- ✓ The lack of a model for developing strategies. All strategies adopted in the Republic of Bulgaria follow their own logic and structure without a unified model for creating such documents.

- ✓ The lack of research into the connections between strategic ideas and strategic habits, which is confirmed by Bernard Brodie in his “War and Politics”, where he states, “Strategy is nothing if it is not pragmatic” (Brodie 1973, 452). Therefore, strategic theory is primarily a theory of action.

- ✓ Political interests guiding strategic management in the public sector or the excessive politicization of the strategic leadership of the state.

- ✓ The unwillingness of public sector experts to collaborate with scholars who are the true experts in developing strategies and doctrines.

- ✓ The lack of political consensus regarding the development of strategies and/or doctrines. To reach the creation of a functioning strategy, an important but not sufficient condition for success is achieving consensus among parliamentary political parties. Unfortunately, the usual practice is different, and the strategies created are not for everyone and do not serve the members of society.

- ✓ The lack of public awareness about the development of strategic documents. The most important documents related to the development of the state remain without the necessary approval and support both at the inter-institutional level and “between the governed and those governing, between politicians and experts, national and international institutions” (Tanev 2016, 12). Without obtaining approval from all participants in the social contract, the strategy cannot have a long life and will remain merely a plan that will be executed with great difficulty, if at all.

Therefore, the elaboration of a National Strategy would help the Bulgarian political elite to find the right path out of the permanent crisis (especially the political one). Moreover, it would contribute to uniting the nation and society in restoring the functions of the state and statehood, thereby supporting the building of an informed and consolidated society, united around clearly defined national ideals, goals, interests, and tasks for achieving them.

2. Dimensions of Strategies

The dimensions of strategies refer to the various aspects and factors that shape and influence the development, implementation, and effectiveness of strategic decisions. These dimensions can be viewed from different angles, each offering a unique perspective on the understanding of strategy. In order to achieve a common understanding by the politicians, we shall bring forward some of the main dimensions of strategies.

- ✓ *Political Dimension:* The political environment, in which the strategy develops and is executed. It considers political ideologies, governance structures, diplomatic relations, and political stability, all of which can affect the choices of action made by a country or organization.

- ✓ *Economic Dimension:* Refers to the financial and resource-related aspects that influence strategy. It includes economic opportunities, trade relations, resource distribution, and the financial stability of the state or organization. Economic power plays a crucial role in determining the feasibility and sustainability of strategic objectives.

- ✓ *Military Dimension:* In both national and international contexts, the military dimension refers to defence capabilities, armed forces, and security strategies employed by a country. This includes military resources, technological innovations, and the role of military power in achieving strategic goals.

- ✓ *Technological Dimension:* This dimension focuses on the role of technology in shaping strategy. It includes technological innovations, cyber capabilities, digital warfare, and technological advancements that can provide strategic advantages in both peacetime and conflict.

✓ *Social Dimension*: Refers to the social structure and cultural context in which the strategy operates. It includes public opinion, social movements, cultural factors, and social norms that may either support or challenge the strategic direction. Understanding social dynamics is critical to creating strategies that resonate with society.

✓ *Ecological Dimension*: This dimension examines environmental factors, including natural resources, climate change, and geographical location of a nation or organization. It also considers the sustainability of strategic decisions and their potential impact on the environment.

✓ *Psychological Dimension*: Relates to the human factors of strategy, such as motivation, morale, and decision-making psychology, of both leaders and the population. It includes how perceptions, ideologies, and emotions influence the formulation and execution of strategy.

✓ *Historical Dimension*: Involves the historical context in which the strategy is formulated. Experiences, lessons learned from history, and previous strategic failures or successes shape the approach to the current strategy.

✓ *International Dimension*: This dimension examines the global stage and how the strategy of a given country or organization interacts with other international actors. It includes alliances, rivalries, international organizations, treaties, and the broader geopolitical environment.

Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and analysing strategy in both national and organizational contexts. Each dimension contributes to the complexity of strategic decision-making, and the balance between them can determine the success or failure of a strategy.

In Bulgarian state governance, numerous operational strategies have been developed as is stated on the page of Bulgarian Council of Ministers (Bulgarian Council of Ministers 2010). Instead of specifying national interests, goals, and tasks, these strategies rely on more general political programs, which have been developed by either the EU or NATO. This established practice represents a fundamental problem in the partial development of strategies, especially without the development of national strategies. Furthermore, no allied document, or document from a community, to which Bulgaria is a member, can replace the absent national documents.

From everything presented so far, it can be concluded that there is a serious problem in the development of strategies in our country, whose essence is not the people engaged in this activity, but primarily:

- ✓ The way of thinking;
- ✓ The management of the strategic planning process;
- ✓ The lack of desire and consensus from the political “elites” to develop a national strategy or what is known as a “Grand Strategy”.

Other factors contributing to the current unsatisfactory governance of the state and its statehood can also be identified. However, the main problem lies, above all, in the established and inherited thinking stereotypes from the time of socialism, when Bulgaria, represented by the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP), partially renounced the sovereignty of the country, implementing decisions dictated by the USSR and the CPSU for over forty-five years.

In April 2010, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, acknowledging that there were no established criteria for developing strategies in practice, and that their names did not adhere to clear logic based on their content and scope, and thus adopted the “Methodology for Strategic Planning in the Republic of Bulgaria” (Bulgarian Council of Ministers 2010). The main goal of the methodology is to propose an algorithm that structures and ties strategic planning in the state to the adherence to standards and principles. The specific goals of the methodology are:

- ✓ To create a standard for strategic planning in the administration;
- ✓ To clarify the meaning of the key principles for developing and implementing strategic documents, among which the principle of public partnership between state institutions and citizens and their organizations is primary;

- ✓ To introduce the main types of strategic documents, fixing their names depending on their place in the hierarchy of strategic documents;

- ✓ To present the mandatory elements of the content of strategic documents.

The methodology declares that “the main types of strategic documents are strategy, policy, program, plan, and concept, with a clarification that policy and concept are not strategic documents” (Bulgarian Council of Ministers 2010). However, there is not clear indication of the status of such documents, raising the logical question of their gravity and legal standing. Furthermore, it openly “recommends that each strategy have the following structure: analysis of the sector’s state, vision for the sector’s development, leading principles for strategy implementation, strategic goals of sectoral policy, activities to achieve the goals, and expected results from the execution of the planned activities” (Bulgarian Council of Ministers 2010). These guidelines do not correspond with the true essence and purpose of a strategy and, therefore, are not correct. The focus of the strategy is placed on the “state” rather than the intent; the “vision” follows unexpectedly, as a happy idea, and the leading principles are presented in third place in the sequence indicated in the methodology”. The model presented for strategy development prioritizes only the “execution” principles, but not the formation of the strategic vision. The goals defined are limited to determining public policies, which are not strategic. In the model for strategy presented in the methodology, the activities and expected results are included as if it were just an ordinary plan.

Professor Tanev in “How Strategists Think” points out the origin of the methodology, stating: “The structure of this document bears the signature of his French consultants, raised in the spirit of French statism – a philosophy that hardly fits our dramatic transition from a single-party monopoly over the state and economy to political pluralism and a free market economy” (Tanev 2016, 15). This was also discussed earlier in the present paper, namely that instead of developing a national strategy that meets the needs of Bulgarian society, foreign models are copied and imposed for implementation. Furthermore, the experts brought in to create a national strategic document use documents from other countries as a foundation. These do not align with Bulgarian national interests, goals, and tasks, but were created to achieve the objectives of their origin countries.

3. Measuring National-Level Strategies

When approaching the evaluation of strategies at the national level, after analysing and assessing the security environment, the process moves toward goal-setting and defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- ✓ *The nature of the national strategy* should be focused on achieving long-term goals that can be measured through specific indicators.

- ✓ *Main approaches to measuring strategy effectiveness* are proposed by authors such as Mintzberg (Mintzberg 1994) (strategic planning), and Kaplan & Norton (Balanced Scorecard) (Kaplan 1996), who offer methods for tracking strategic objectives through KPIs.

To ensure *National Security*, indicators that can be used include:

- ✓ *National security index*: the number of terrorist attacks, crime rates, instances of external threats.

- ✓ *Military capacity*: the size of the military, defence spending, weapons modernization.

Evaluating the resources that the country must allocate to specific strategic goals involves not only financial and human resources but also diplomatic, technological, and natural resources. Some well-known models that can be used include:

- ✓ *Porter’s value chain model* (Porter, Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance 1985) and *Barney’s resource-based view*, which emphasize the importance of resources in executing strategies (Barney 1991, 102).

- ✓ An example could be the *economic development strategy*, where effectiveness can be measured through:

- ✓ *Investment index*: the volume of foreign and domestic investments.
- ✓ *GDP growth*: the annual growth of Gross Domestic Product.
- ✓ *Export revenue*: the value of exports of goods and services.

A primary goal of the strategy is the evaluation of the impact of external and internal factors. This evaluation includes international relations, economic conditions, and internal socio-political aspects. Furthermore, these issues are addressed in the works of Porter, who examines how nations can create a competitive advantage in the global economy by applying theories of competitiveness at the national level (competitive strategies) (Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance* 1985, 67). Additionally, Hamel and Prahalad (Hamel 1994) offer a new perspective on strategic management, emphasizing the importance of strategic skills and capabilities in the context of dynamic competition (strategic skills and capabilities).

The extent to which national strategies are measured requires an integrated approach that combines both theoretical principles and practical models for evaluating performance and results. The applied indicators and methodologies, including KPIs, Balanced Scorecard, risk analyses, and performance assessments, are essential tools for ensuring the most effective execution and adaptation of national strategies.

4. Challenges to the Strategic Planning in Bulgaria

The “Methodology for Strategic Planning in the Republic of Bulgaria” is a clear example that it is yet another document developed merely because it was required, rather than because it was necessary to standardize the development of strategies. The intention behind the creation of the methodology was to establish uniform procedures, understanding, and structure, which would aid the strategic planning process.

The existing mistakes, already being made particularly the widespread nature of these mistakes, further amplify the question of the misunderstanding of what exactly a strategy is. Regardless of various “experts” claiming that a strategy is whatever they have created, there are still those who firmly believe that strategies are long-term plans for achieving significant goals.

In the field of strategic planning, there are both assumptions and already manifesting practical indicators, suggesting that scientists should not be involved in crafting strategies, and that the entire process should be left solely to practical experts. This viewpoint implies that those with hands-on experience best handle strategy creation, rather than by those focused on theoretical or scientific approaches. However, this perspective overlooks the potential value that scientific analysis and research can bring to strategic planning, such as data-driven insights, long-term forecasting, and a broader understanding of complex systems. This, in turn, fosters and encourages amateurism in the activity. The confidential position of those drafting the strategy further nurtures their self-confidence, reinforced by the protection they receive from the higher echelons of power who commission the strategy. This protection creates a sense of comfort for the governing authorities at any given moment. Considering all these details, the person responsible for drafting a strategy inevitably begins to think of themselves as an “elite”, despite being kept in the shadows and not receiving public acclaim. Feelings of self-importance, or that one is irreplaceable and infallible then dominate and lead to behaviour that assumes impunity. There is no evaluation of the execution of strategies, so their application will not be assessed, which means that no sanctions will be imposed if mistakes are made, or at the very least, if missed opportunities are discovered due to ignorance.

When creating strategies, what dominates is the so-called managerial routine, which has long been the focus of criticism from numerous *scholars and experts* in strategic sciences such as Prof. Mitko Stoykov, Prof. Todor Tanev, Prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, and etc. This criticism somehow escapes a large portion of experts, especially those who neglect these critical arguments, but regardless of this, continue to write strategies, implementation plans, white papers, and concepts solely based on the political support received, instructions from superiors, and the authority granted to them to carry

out these tasks. Despite the use of such experts, the scientifically grounded understanding of strategy has evolved over the last few decades, often causing suffering to its “client” (the people of the Republic of Bulgaria).

Despite the current state of strategic documents, good strategic practices do exist in Bulgaria as well. They exist alongside poor ones. The issue that needs to be addressed as soon as possible is the rapid increase in the overall number of strategies, resulting from the upsurge of poor, rather than good practices. The imbalance between the two groups is growing constructively.

On the other hand, the “Methodology for Strategic Planning in the Republic of Bulgaria”, issued in 2010, identified the need to create rules for the development of strategic documents, and has provided the necessary regulations while defining the principles for creating these documents. However, despite the good intentions behind the creation of the methodology, many issues remain unaddressed, primarily concerning:

- ✓ On what basis these strategic documents were created?
- ✓ What is the classification of these documents?
- ✓ What period should they cover? (The methodology specifies that long-term documents have an implementation period of over 10 years, but does not mention the validity period for strategies.)
- ✓ What criteria should sectoral policies meet?
- ✓ Is there any normative framework for creating strategic documents?
- ✓ Who or which organization/university is responsible for the education, training, and qualification of experts in strategic planning?
- ✓ Is there a model for formulating strategies, especially national ones, that would serve as the foundation for developing supporting strategies and policies?

Despite the widespread conservatism and nihilism that have enveloped Bulgaria, there are efforts and attempts to develop “good strategies” promising strategic visions for the development of specific regions in the country, as well as for commercial and industrial enterprises (Tanev 2016, 16). What begins as a large-scale idea for the development of a given organization in the minds of forward-thinking leaders is constantly evolving and attracting more active internal support. A successful strategy does not stem from an initial plan created by an unknown author on political instructions, but rather from an open vision that resonates across all levels of the organization. This vision evolves through continuous adaptation to shifting circumstances (Tanev 2016, 17).

Bulgaria, throughout its history, has never had a national (state) strategy or doctrine. Moreover, as an active member of the European Union, the country could determine its development path using long-term ideas similar to those of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. The inability of political parties to reach a national consensus, and, as a result, to consider ways to pull the country out of the managerial, moral, and economic chaos it has fallen into, is the leading issue today. At this stage, this seems like an impossible task for the so-called political elites who are governing the state and promoting ideas foreign to our country, while mapping out imaginary paths to tackle the permanent crisis in which Bulgaria finds itself.

Conclusion

From everything outlined so far, it is clear that more than ever there is an urgent need to develop a national (Grand) strategy, which will subsequently be used as a basis for developing all reviews and/or new supporting strategies at the national level (Bulgaria). The focus when shaping future strategies must be on: the process for assessing the security environment (global, regional, and internal to the country), the analysis and formulation of a national ideal, national interests, goals, and the means and methods for achieving them. Special attention must be given to the sequence for developing the strategy and the time frame for its implementation. For the successful formulation of

such a strategy, the involvement of all parliamentary political forces and ensuring political consensus is of utmost importance.

To overcome all negative aspects related to the development (formulation) of strategies, special attention must be paid to strategic thinking, which, by its nature, differs significantly from any other type of thinking related to the management of individual state structures. Therefore, to be understood, it is necessary to realize and comprehend that strategic thinking is a specific type of thinking that is distinct from the thinking of experts at the technological, tactical, and operational levels, and not merely their repetition at a higher level. Strategic thinking often resorts to logic opposite to that used for managing lower societal levels. Many experts and scholars from various fields try to decipher the essence of strategies, strategic planning, and management, separating them from ordinary rationality, daily experience, and routine. There is still the often made claim by involved experts that “strategy is not a plan” and provoke thoughts on what is “obvious”, and for this reason, it is unconditionally accepted as true. Thus, the development of strategies merely because they are required by law, or because they are recorded in one legal document or another, is insufficient.

Institutional-level experts are tasked with creating this crucial document for society, which citizens rely on to improve their conditions-both economically and socially, among others. These same experts, intoxicated by their “greatness”, fail to account for specific facts, among which stands out the lack of a fundamental basis for developing a strategy-namely a national strategy-that defines the desired final state of the country and directs the focus of sectoral strategies to implement national goals and interests. Such long-term national goals are currently absent from the democratic development of the Republic of Bulgaria. After Bulgaria’s accession to NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2007-when our membership in both organizations was a long-term goal for the state and society-today, extremely short-term goals are being set, with a time horizon of no more than one or two years. The accession of Bulgaria to the Schengen Area and the country’s potential entry into the Eurozone, although strategic goals by their nature, have very short deadlines for implementation, placing them on the borderline between operational and strategic objectives.

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