The Institute for Statecraft

Developing Strategic Thinking and the Means for Implementing National Strategy

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Establishing a modern perspective - Nation-State vs Network State.

Discussions about conflict in today's world have tended to revolve around the issue of "nation states versus sub-state actors". But this distinction overlooks the issue of how society in many long-established, stable states has evolved in recent years. Our traditional definition of a nation-state is no longer adequate.

There are several factors which contribute to the impact of this phenomenon on society today. The most significant is the communications revolution. This refers (a) to the universal ease of electronic communication, with the consequent availability of information; (b) to the ease of travel and, (c) conversely the ability not to need to travel to communicate. This reinforces our evaluation that today's state is no longer simply defined by its geographical boundaries or by a single cultural identity. Its *interests*, therefore, are no longer co-terminous with its physical boundaries. The geographical territory is a meeting-place of networks of identity, communities-of-interest and loyalties. It is a "Network-state", linked to other network-states, competing with other network-states in *hypercompetition*.

Another major feature of this "globalised" world is the multi-national company. Not only does international business link countries together (not a new phenomenon) but the larger companies have their own identities, jurisprudence, interests, culture and loyalties. They not only contribute to the network-state, but now effectively constitute "network-states" in their own right - independent players on the world stage.

It is from this new kind of base, into this new world- this "network of network-states" - that a country must exercise *statecraft,* that is, deploy and employ its various tools of national power skilfully to achieve a desired effect in the world.

However, the most significant property of any network is that it is *complex*. *Complicated* means that the object or issue is highly detailed, but those details function in fixed, linear relationships. They can be tracked, understood, predicted and controlled- at least by someone. A Boeing 747 is complicated. But someone, somewhere knows exactly what each component of the aircraft does, and why. In such a system, an application of power, as long as it is judicious, can always be relied upon to produce a given result. By contrast, in something *complex*, the relationships and interactions between elements in the system are not fixed, cannot be predicted, and can only partially be understood. Complexity, therefore, cannot be *controlled*. It can only be *influenced* over time. Whilst a given application of power into a linear system can be relied upon to achieve the same effect or outcome time after time, the same application of power into a network will <u>not</u> always achieve the same outcome. The wiser, more experienced soldiers and diplomats have always recognised the

truth of this when applied to their own crafts. But we are now seeing this phenomenon extended across virtually all aspects of society and indeed of the international sphere as well.

If power is henceforth to be used to achieve *influence* rather than *control*, then this significantly impacts upon the kind of *forces* we need if we are to achieve the effect we want. It impacts upon the concept of *Strategy.* It renders the simplistic application of single sources of power much less likely to have the desired effect, whether that power be military force or development aid. The traditional tools of nation-states still have a significant role to play in this game of influence, but it is not the same as it was in the more straightforward circumstances of past generations.

Hypercompetition.

This is the most prevalent and insidious form of instability in today's world. Conflict and competition are being waged by ever more varied and ever less predictable means. What constitutes a *weapon* in this new "hot peace" no longer has to go *bang*. Energy, cash as bribes, corrupt business practices, cyber-attack, assassination, economic warfare, information and propaganda, terrorism, education, health, climate change or plain old-fashioned military intimidation are all being used as weapons of hypercompetition. Some national governments and sub-state groups have recognised this situation and have embraced this new form of conflict/competition, using it most effectively.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that, instead of two clear and distinct states of "war" and "peace" we now have several forms of *war* and *peace*. Indeed, the nature of *war* and *peace* is different for each of the above categories of instability, so that we need to establish what we mean by *war* and *peace* in each context.

This in turn requires that we define what we mean by *power* in each context; the power to do what? When we are confident that we know what forms of power we are likely to need in each case, then we can set about devising the kind of *tools* we will need to generate that power, and how these tools will interact when used in combination. This is not new. Bertrand Russell writing in 1938 in his book "On Power" showed that he really understood the different forms of power and their importance. But the ideas have been lost in the black-and-white world in which we lived during WWII and the Cold War which followed. We now need to regain that lost understanding.

To do this effectively we will need to generate serious study and debate on the issue. For this we will need a new glossary/language, a new definition of key terms: war and peace; strategy and statecraft; what constitutes success or victory in modern circumstances. A more nuanced version of victory and success will need to be well understood by practitioners, politicians and public alike, and someone, some organisation, will have to lead in the development and teaching of this idea. In our networked world we must strive for *influence* rather than *control*; we should not be trying or expecting to *solve* a problem but to create more favourable conditions for local people to solve their own problems. In other words, we must henceforth adopt an *ecological* approach. This will not sit well with the current generation of Western politicians or the consultants they are so fond of using, wedded as they all are to the "silver bullet" – the definitive solution to a perceived problem, applied top-down, efficiently managed, achieved in a definable (preferably short) space of time and on a fixed budget.

The first requirement of any organisation wishing to have an impact in this new, untidy and unpredictable world is to understand that instability and friction, order and degradation, growth and decline are natural and essential features of any viable society. A totally stable society is a dead society.

The second requirement is to establish what intelligence they need to get their understanding of the world right: to assess what level of instability is good for a society and to determine when that level is too high or too low. When instability gets out of control they must be able to assess what mixture of the "categories of instability" listed above they are dealing with in any given situation. This needs a new, more appropriate kind of intelligence than is currently generally understood by the use of that word. The fundamental basis for this must be "Open Source" Intelligence that will enable us to characterise the world, to identify the systems we face and the issues we must resolve in the appropriate context, and to target accurately and then interpret correctly the covert intelligence with which there has recently been such a damaging obsession.

Covert intelligence is essential, no doubt about it. But without a deep and inclusive understanding of the environment, accurate targeting and correct interpretation is just not possible. The ubiquity of information may destabilise, but since it is also observable, we should be able to recognise the emergence of threats and opportunities in the "complex world system". However, we must also be prepared to "instrument" societies - that is, to observe and measure them closely and scientifically, so that they will provide us with the insights we need to determine what instabilities they might generate.

The third requirement is for the organisation to be able to get its message across, to ensure that the Government and the people understand that they are actually engaged in one (or more) instability, like it or not. The biggest problem at the moment would appear to be the widespread failure to recognise the hypercompetition to which countries are being subjected. We can hardly do better here than to quote Leon Trotsky, trying to alert people to an earlier conflict, in his case the "class war". "You may not be interested in this war", he told his unwilling audience, "but this war is interested in you."

Values, Interests and Strategy - their importance to a country's ability to advance its position and influence in the world.

It has become unfashionable in recent years to talk about values and interests. Yet if these do not motivate our actions in the world, these actions will have no coherence and little worth. What use our trying to change things in the world if we do not know what we are trying to change them to?

Values

To be able to define and articulate our interests and inform the ways in which we can discriminate between the kinds of instability with which we must deal, we need to be able to determine and publicly state our values. For national interests, this means national values.

Herein lies something of a problem. The values of a network-state with its multiple communities, its co-existing cultures, the connectivity of its diasporas, in short - its *complexity*, are difficult to

determine. Today, traditional national customs live side-by-side with the very different customs of different cultures. Diaspora populations from countries with which the state in question might be in acute competition now live within its borders and can be exploited to undermine national interests or national security. Foreign commercial companies with very different, even corrupt, values and practices might operate on the nation's soil, infect the nation's companies with their bad practices and jeopardise the reputation of local business. Equally, cohesive ethnic communities not only bring political influences from their parent countries, they offer the possibility of influencing those parent countries themselves- but only if this opportunity is properly exploited.

However, restating our national values is not a thing simply to be done by edict by a Prime Minister or President. This is an issue for discussion within broader society, bottom up as well as top down. Nor is it simply a form of words. Actions speak louder than words. What people do carries more weight than what they say. This is an issue of leadership. Those in a position to do so should show the lead. Anyone in a Government Department determining or implementing policy is in such a position. What they do will be interpreted as a statement of their values, personal, institutional, national, depending on the circumstances of the observer. The values which a government body, even a small one, espouses by its actions in working to improve peoples' lot in life, to increase their security and thereby enable them to run their lives and develop their societies as they would wish, can have an impact massively disproportionate to the size or budget of the organisation. This is a strong argument for government bodies to be more proactive as they were in an earlier age, seeking out and implementing tasks, conscious of the fact that in doing so they are treading a path for others to follow. Where government bodies neglect these tasks, private or foreign organisations will often fill the gap, usually for the worse, not for the better.

Interests

Just as a government needs to establish and restate national values, it also needs to re-establish that understanding of national interests which will in turn enable national strategy and strategic thinking. As with values, it has become unfashionable to talk and think in terms of "national interest". But it is high time to do away with such damaging political correctness. In a world now characterised by hypercompetition, in which network states and smaller communities are all striving for a comparative advantage, those states which do not develop this mind-set and do not realise the nature and extent of the process will find themselves ever more rapidly disadvantaged and reduced in international standing.

 Hypercompetition is not just a sort of game. There are no agreed rules. It is bounded only by what you can get away with. Because we are in a networked world it is not an issue of *control*, it is an issue of *influence*. We need to make ourselves alert to how others are trying to influence us, and we need to be aware of how everything we do will have influence. We need to use that influence consciously to achieve our ends. Countries are in constant competition with all those around them, whether they consider them allies or EU partners or hostile states and organisations.

Only the extent and nature of the competition will differ, and perhaps not by as much as we would hope and expect. Few would dispute that China is conducting a competitive strategy. The EU was founded specifically on the recognition that competition was fundamental to societies and with the aim of preventing that competition between European countries from escalating into armed conflict, as had so often happened in the past. But the EU has not done away with competition - far from it.

The stated basis of US industrial strategy is to remain a generation ahead of the rest of the world in war-fighting technologies. This has led to the US consciously dominating and degrading many European national defence industries. How many people are aware of this US national strategy?

As a consequence, we need to articulate our national interests in a form suitable for action. We need to revive the understanding across Government and society that the country must develop a *competitive stance*. As with values, this is a bottom-up as well as a top-down process. At the top this is a responsibility for both Government and Parliament. It should be the fundamental issue for the PM. But anyone in a Government Department has a responsibility within their own sphere of activity to (a) contribute to the common understanding by identifying both the threats to our national interest and national security and the opportunities which present themselves (or can be created) to be exploited to advantage, and (b) develop options for action accordingly. In today's complex environment these will not be obvious, straightforward issues and decisions. We are talking about a continuous process, across all kinds of *power*, employing all kinds of *forces* (tools) in coordinated *campaigns*, to achieve that competitive advantage and advance national interests.

It is naïve in the extreme for anyone in Government Departments or even in NGOs to think that they can stand aside from this process; that what they do can be somehow divorced from national interest or international competition. An individual can have the purest motives for their actions and can act out of pure altruism. But the actions will play into the hypercompetition nevertheless, and be judged by competitors accordingly.

This brings us back to the *forces* we need to exercise power through influence in this networked world, and how those *forces* should be directed and employed. Armed Forces remain the Government's most versatile, ready organisation which can be deployed into dangerous spaces and can protect itself (and others) whilst the instability is dealt with, with or without the Armed Forces' direct involvement. The unique advantage which Armed Forces possess is that they are a *disciplined force*, not just a *killing force* – a force which can build and which can influence behaviour, not just deliver violence. The (non-military) *forces* a country needs to deploy drawn from other Departments and from the NGO and private sectors, need to be welded, together with the Armed Forces, into a *disciplined community* commanding a broad range of "powers" which can seek to influence collectively. Within a *disciplined community* it will be far easier to maintain the altruistic approach which will render intervention more effective, and to maintain the ability to cope with the extreme stress that intervention will impose on the individuals involved. Humanitarian aid workers are just as vulnerable to PTSD as soldiers.

Strategy

It is no accident that, until relatively recently, the word *strategy* was used only in a military or a national/ international affairs context (*grand strategy*). Strategy was an essential tool, and the ability to think and act strategically an essential attribute, for coping with complexity. But the expansion of the use of the word "strategy" over the past fifty years (so that it can now be applied to anything at all) has diluted the meaning of the term and obscured its fundamental significance. The term has come in some cases merely to indicate *large-scale*; in other cases, it has become synonymous with the word *plan*, so we get "a strategy". It can even just mean a given document. Its relationship to *policy* has become hopelessly confused by politicians, civil servants and academics failing to apply intellectual self-discipline.

To be able to employ strategy, to think and act strategically, requires not only a deep knowledge and understanding of the environment, the players and actual circumstances, not only a profound intellectual ability, not only an agility and flexibility of mind; it also requires one to know what one's interests are. For grand strategy, this means national interests. Without a clear understanding of the relevant interests (quite complex in a "network-state") we can have rapid reactions, we can have clever plans, but we cannot have strategy.

In many governments, the understanding of "Strategy" has become blurred because they have lost the arts of *Strategy Making* and *Strategic Thinking*.[i] There are many reasons for this, some of which are as follows:

(a) Where governments develop a national policy of allowing themselves to be tied to a large neighbour for defence or economic reasons, the pressure is to align national interests with those of the chosen partner and subordinated the country to the Grand Strategy of, say, Moscow or Brussels. They gradually lose the understanding of the need to have a competitive stance. As this understanding fades away, the mechanisms for protecting national competitive advantage will atrophy and die unless steps are taken to prevent this. Successive governments fail to recognise what is happening. As a result, even the understanding that the country needs a national Strategy comes to be lost.

(b) The Mechanisms for developing and teaching Strategy and Strategy Making are allowed to atrophy. The Armed Forces alone might retain a traditional concept of strategy. But as they themselves are reduced in scale, the discipline of earlier military thinking is easily lost. In some cases, having a "National Strategy" has actually become unacceptable on ideological grounds.

'Strategy' and 'Strategic thinking' are perhaps best understood as qualities of governing. To confuse this with 'a strategy' and to focus only on 'a strategy' as a document or fixed plan, however thorough and detailed, would be a disastrous mistake. It would be to fail to recognise that strategy must be forward-thinking, innovative, creative, constantly evolving and changing, not merely in reaction to changing circumstances and unforeseeable challenges. Strategic thinking must be able to predict the possible arenas, scenarios and intensity of those challenges.

Strategy must also address requirements and constraints and balance the two by prioritising. This requires judgement, which in its turn is based on a deep understanding of national interests, short-, medium- and long-term, and the values and principles by which we determine these interests. The real utility of 'a Strategy', in the form of a published document, is in its ability to harness a community to act coherently or in a self-disciplined way to achieve a shared objective. As such, it is a tool of leadership, part of a PM's crucial "Strategic Communication" process. It will, in all likelihood, need to be paralleled by a confidential strategic assessment which will be constantly amended and updated as a basis for a strategically considered response.

In a very hierarchical society with no strong democratic traditions, it will be less important that the community (the public, the voters) are involved in the creation of 'a strategy', only that the final document is recognisable to them as "good". In a society with strong democratic traditions, it will

be important for public acceptance that the wider community is involved in the creation of the document/strategy.

In sum, moribund organisations are uncomfortable with 'Strategy' and 'Strategic Thinking' because, within the overall act of governing, these are more tools of leadership than they are of management. After a long period of relative peace, stable development and economic prosperity, our society has seen the growth of 'management' as the key to solving all society's problems. Risk is seen as entirely bad and threatening to the existing order. Self-interest begins to predominate as any sense of a need for collective, concerted action fades, and the sense of community interest is lost. Social responsibility and cohesion become fragmented into antagonistic, isolated individualism and the concept of the "common good" gradually fades. Under such circumstances, the corrosive theories 'Risk-Management' (which has become another way of saying 'risk-avoidance' or 'passing the buck') proliferate. Methodology takes hold, in which the *process* becomes the most important thing. Outputs replace outcomes as the key measure of performance and reward.

It is because we are now experiencing a very unsettling rate of social change and serious economic disruption across the globe – normally only experienced in time of major war and threat to the very existence of the nation – that we are recognising the recent failures of many national governing processes and the lack of strategic thinking. Without strategy and strategic thinking, essential national organisations stop evolving. Without an understanding of the need to develop a competitive stance a state will remain prey to those countries, friend and foe alike, which are waging competition actively against them.

It is essential for a PM to recognise that, whatever they might claim, governmental institutions which have failed over the past decade to foresee, identify and deal with emerging crises and maintain national sovereignty, are today totally incapable of providing a solution to the crisis which is now upon the country. There is no quick, simple solution to the complex problems which now beset states. To resolve these problems will require a re-structuring of governing processes to provide oneself with the capabilities described in this paper so that strategic thinking to achieve competitive advantage once again becomes the default setting of all elements of the state's Body Politic.

What a country needs to be able to develop and maintain strategic thinking and a national strategy are listed in the endnote to this paper.

What practical tools of Statecraft does a state need if it is to advance its interests in the modern world?

As noted above, the range of instabilities we face requires us to be able to deploy and employ correspondingly diverse types of *power:* to stabilise the situation; to counter threats; to exploit opportunities in the national interest; to prevent further problems. These types of power might include diplomatic activity, economic action, political pressure, legal action, capacity building for good governance, security sector reform, and many others.

To wield these different kinds of *power* needs different kinds of *tools* or *forces.* Armed forces are a useful, sometimes invaluable, source of power, but they are not the only one. Indeed, deploying

them in "kinetic" (violent) operations may in the future be less and less likely to produce the solution to resolving an instability. The other, non-military kinds of *forces* we frequently subsume under the expression "The Comprehensive Approach", often without adequate definition and usually without adequate provision. These *forces* may be governmental, generated by many different government departments. They may be NGOs. They may (increasingly) be commercial companies. *Forces* is not an ideal word, implying as it does coercion, but it is preferable to *tools*, which implies equipment. So, let us stick with *forces* for the moment in the absence of a better word.

To be useful, all the various forms of *forces* need to be:

(a) rapidly mobilisable (and easily de-mobilisable when no longer needed, so as to be affordable);

(b) deployable, usually rapidly;

(c) employable, by competent people, in concert with each other and in coordination with the activities of other players (other affected states); in accordance with local conditions; conforming to a strategy or in pursuit of a national strategic objective;

(d) available on a sufficient scale when needed;

(e) adaptable

(f) accountable.

The implications of the above are considerable. Firstly, it is the common failure to be able to provide these other, non-military kinds of *forces* that often leads governments to make inappropriate use of their militaries, sometimes with unfortunate results, or to allow the deployment of poorly-regulated private companies whose profitable activities may in fact be worthless or even counter-productive.

Secondly, generating suitable *forces* will be difficult because government departments other than the MoD are not accustomed to creating and maintaining significant groupings of people and material for protracted external deployment.

Thirdly, without suitably educated, creative staff, agreed concepts and some doctrinal guidance, Departments have no common basis for the design of their forces and how they will contribute to the whole. No single Department can provide this for other Departments. Any attempt by, for example, MoD to do this will be rejected by other Departments. This is not just an issue of pride or prejudice. Government Departments each have their own distinct cultural identity born out of the Departments' functions and operating environments. This shapes their philosophies, language, procedures, staff attitudes, recruitment and promotion criteria, and so on.

As we cannot afford to specialise and to choose what instabilities to prepare for and what not, we need a new concept altogether for how to organise, equip, man and train/educate our Armed Forces together with the other kinds of *forces* we need to exercise power. We need "Adaptable Forces". This means we need Armed Forces able to:

    - maintain their key core competences (capabilities) for all eventualities

- expand their capacities rapidly when needed and contract them again when no longer needed

- expand into the areas specifically required by the emerging (unforeseen) instability (threat, challenge etc.)

But, as noted above, these same criteria must be fulfilled by civilian *forces* (i.e. from other Government Departments and from the private sector) as well as by the military. They must include an educational system able to provide the staff with the understanding, ability to learn, and the skills they will need.

Finally, the development of such military and civilian forces raises the question of how they should be controlled and commanded. If, as we have noted above, no one single Department is fitted to exercise command and control, to enable and enforce collaboration and to coordinate their use, then some supra-departmental body is clearly required with the competences and mechanisms to do this, reporting directly to a PM or President.

It would be easy, looking at the problems faced by some national institutions, to conclude that it is too difficult to contemplate radical change without the stimulus of some shocking event. But that is not my conclusion. To be sure, there is no simple solution to a complex problem but, as noted above, it is possible to influence the situation. My sense is that the time is now ripe to exert that influence; that there is an emerging realisation that things need to change and a growing readiness to address that need. If this is so, then how best can we sum up the situation so that we can grasp what we need to do and explain it; how to summarise where we are so as to be able to understand and explain where we need to go? How do we change our attitudes, procedures and institutions so that we can cope with the fact that we are experiencing not a single shock, but the cumulative effects of many? This is recognised by the people of many countries in their distrust of their leaders, political, media, industrial and especially financial. How do we restore their faith in these institutions?

Lenin is not a fashionable figure to quote these days. Nevertheless, as a proponent of social transformation he put an immense effort into studying both revolution and war as closely-linked social phenomena capable of precipitating rapid, massive social change. What he had to say about them is well worth reading even if the actual social experiment which he used these phenomena to usher in has now been discredited. There are two quotations he drew from Marx which are particularly relevant to our situation today. They are:

(a) "Revolutions are often accompanied by the catalyst of war." and "Wars have a revolutionising effect on society."

(b) "Wars put nations to the test. Just as the ancient Egyptian mummies crumbled to dust when exposed to the shock of oxygen by the archaeologist, so war will spell the death sentence on any society or institution which is ossified and incapable of change."

In Lenin's assessment both war and revolution are actually defined by high rates of change. The bigger the war, the more drastic the changes it will bring. Today, turning this on its head, we could justifiably say that we are in the midst of a Revolution, or 'at war', because our societies are

experiencing a degree and rate of change which we have previously seen only during major war or revolution.

The fact that this societal transformation has crept up on many countries, rather than being heralded by a *Blitzkrieg* or a mass bloodshed, means that this reality is not evident to most populations. This makes it somewhat dangerous to use the term "war" in attempting to describe today's conditions. It is all too easy to use war and the fear of war to "justify" otherwise unpopular measures, for example for societal control. I am not wishing to raise a war scare. I am using the word most specifically in the sense of Lenin's definition, that the most important feature of war is <u>change</u>. Our 'enemy' in the "war" to which I am referring is the <u>speed and rate of change in the world</u>. Equally, the revolution through which we are now going is <u>not</u> primarily a bloody revolution in the sense of France in 1789 or Russia in 1917, but a social, economic, political revolution akin to the industrial and agrarian revolutions of past centuries. We know it better today as 'globalisation', and it is not without its own forms of pain.

Just as Lenin predicted, and as we pointed out earlier in this paper, today's rapid and profound changes are outpacing our institutional capability to react, to change themselves so as to remain fit-for-purpose. Put another way, "we are at war, but with peacetime attitudes, peacetime procedures, peacetime health and safety regulations, and institutions organised for peacetime". This peacetime culture in many countries has taken over 25 years to develop. It will not be easy to change without a significant shock to the nation and to the body politic. But difficult is not the same as impossible and the greater realisation there is of the nature of the problem and the need to change, the easier it will be to stimulate and lead that change. This is our challenge.

Perceptions of Conflict in the popular mind

In addressing the psychological aspect of new forms of conflict we need to rethink our definitions of *war* and of *peace*. These terms describe an image in the popular mind conditioned by our historical experience and its subsequent interpretation by Hollywood. This gives us a 19th/20th Century Paradigm of War which has the following features:

- 'War' and 'Peace' are distinct "*states-of-being*" in peoples' minds.
- Peace is taken to be the norm; war is seen as a temporary aberration.
- The terms *Defence* and *Security* are almost synonymous. The more tanks and planes we have, the more secure we feel.
- External and internal threats are distinct problems and can be dealt with separately.
- The weapons used are mainly those which kill.
- The default setting in peoples' minds is 'certainty', i.e. it is clear whether we are at war or at peace.

The 21st Century Paradigm as it appears to be developing, and as we have been exploring in this paper, appears more similar to the 14th Century model than it does to the 20th Century. In today's model:

- There is no clear distinction between war and peace and no clear definition of those two crucial terms. Classic 'Hot' wars, internal security problems, counter-insurgencies and natural disasters (our categories of instabilities referred to above) are all mixed up in any order and ratio.
- The terms *defence* and *security* are not synonymous. Military and even economic might no longer guarantee security, (e.g. Israel has a strong economy and stronger armed forces than ever before, but this no longer brings the Israeli people the sense of security which it did in the past).
- There is no longer any clear distinction between internal and external security
- 'Weapons' used are not only military, indeed are not <u>primarily</u> military, but will include the economic, political, informational, electronic, tools of *hypercompetition* as discussed above.
- Victory cannot be determined simply by success in fighting.
- The default setting in peoples' minds is uncertainty and confusion. It is not at all clear whether we are at war or at peace, nor what kind of threat we might be facing.

All these factors taken together mean that a state needs to become more aware of the nature of the world, and of the conflict and competition that it is part of, if it is not to be seriously disadvantaged as a country. Hardest of all is to be aware of the increasing rate of change unless we instrument it and track it carefully. People very quickly get used to new situations, just as a terminally ill person gets used to the gradually increasing dose of morphine. It is all too easy not to be aware, to be passive in the face of gradual change, to be the frog in the water that dies because the water is warming up rapidly, rather than the frog dropped into boiling water that leaps out unharmed because of the sudden shock. This is the essence of 'Hot Peace', and this 'Hot Peace' is the new war our children will have to face. The one consolation we can offer is that, if we are aware of it, we can ensure that it is a lot less horrible than the bloody wars of the last century.

Finally, if we are to cope and to learn quicker than our opponents or our competitors, i.e. to change not just our institutions but ourselves so as to remain fit-for purpose, then in addition to studying and understanding both ourselves, our competitors and our environment, we also need the following four "ities" if we are to succeed:

- Flexibility - of mind
- Adaptability - of function – that is, the ability to use old tools or to modernise them for new tasks
- Agility - speed of reaction
- Humility - the readiness to listen and learn and be prepared to change

This last quality is the most important quality of all. As we set out to advance a nation's interests in the changing world it is likely that we have we have a great deal more to learn than we think from those countries and peoples who for years have been coping with turmoil and instability.

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ENDNOTE:

A checklist of questions to ask to determine if a country has what it needs to do strategy and grand strategy.

Does the country have the following?

- an adequately competent governance structure [Adaptive Governance?], well-staffed, capable of discharging the country's strategic and grand-strategic responsibilities (e.g. those of being a responsible nuclear power)

- a body of people in all sectors of government and society educated so that they think strategically, from which can be formed a corps of qualified professionals with:

  - formal education and training
  - experience enabling learning
  - constant refreshing and updating and sharing of ideas

- a system to enable these people to understand (and keep pace with) the changing world, including:

  - intelligence
  - research
  - experimentation

- a formal system to enable these people to do strategic planning, comprising:

  - no single plan, but constantly renewed planning
  - cross-disciplinary team
  - cross-governmental process (including entities which are now in effect part of the national governmental process – parliament, local government, the corporate sector, NGOs)
  - inter-governmental and Alliance links
  - a formal headquarters organisation as a basis for the above processes

- a leadership mechanism to engage society in the strategy process:

  - taking account of different views and incorporating them
  - providing a lead in a complex environment
  - communicating what is necessary to communicate and keep secret what should be kept secret
  - taking responsibility for error and redirecting as necessary