

STRATEGIC STUDIES: WORKING PROCESS

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Annotation:

Strategic studies development is explained as a working process consisting of two major parts: process of development and process of application of the strategic studies. In the former, the producer is most important for working action, and the strategic study recipient in the latter. The working process parts are discussed separately in the order of progression and sequence of the working stages that are, at the same time, understood elements of the working system. The descriptions are in unified structural scheme stressing out the described element of the working process, element characteristics, inputs and outputs, other elements links. It is the original expression of this paper writer's generalised cognition learnt from long time practical activities in developing strategic studies and management of institutions involved in such work.

Strategic studies are a real tool for development of cognition of rules and principles in the national defence and security. Their purpose is general usage in making decisions on future security matters solutions. Long lasting activity on regular basis makes a substantial part of their cognition as regularity allows continuous development of knowledge on strategy-making in future. The enhancement of cognition and knowledge treasury needs some practical repeating actions.

Therefore, strategic studies should be seen as a **working process** with its specific subjects, sources, tools, procedures and products rather than a one-shot job made by randomly chosen or assigned individuals. Similarly to other activities related to practical national defence or security, it is necessary to follow profession specialists issues, monitor the applicability of the feasible standardisation level of methods, procedures, information sources, output products, documents and procedural standardisation in forecasting through strategic studies usage.

Development of technical papers based on organised collection of information, technical discussion and package of other actions represents a crucial part of the strategic studies **development process**. Based on empiric research, the results of such activities were packages of cognition and knowledge on national security and defence and on their eminent elements, factors, tendencies that allowed construction of various scenarios of

future states and procedures for their meeting. It is unavoidable to stress that such packages contained knowledge of the strategic study producer. The producer is the centre of effort, initiative, activity and working performance. A good producer used to be and is immensely interested during the strategic studies development process in a suitable way to modify the knowledge form so that it convenes the recipient's needs. Such procedures comprise interaction of the known and unpredicted users during the study development as a result of communication and gradual learning the strategic issues on the recipient's side.

The other crucial part is made of the **strategic studies usage process**. That's why strategic studies development makes sense. It is their real utilisation in decision-making, improvement of knowledge on defence and security including image-of-future specification. The utilisation process is very specific for the roles played by the strategic study producer and recipient. The main point is no longer the producer but the strategic study recipient. Strategy understandings, realisation of position, course of action policy selection, planning or strategy implementation are now the tasks for the latter person.

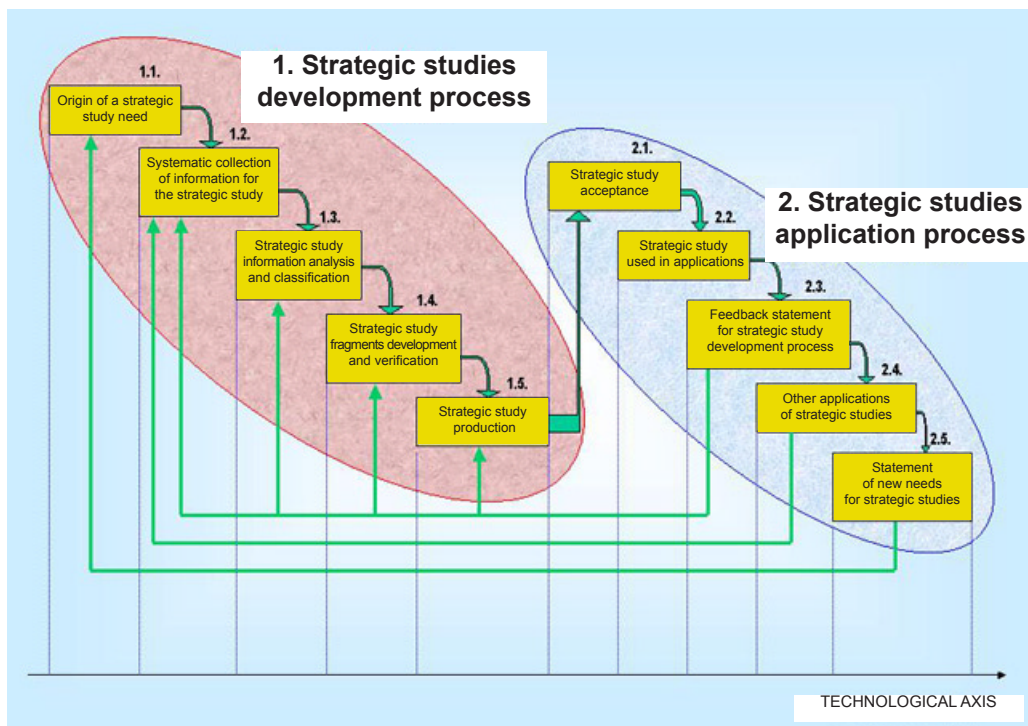


Figure 1: Scheme of strategic studies working stages

The strategic studies seen from the actual procedure sequence stand for a specific working procedure that could differentiate by the working stages. Scheme of this is shown in Figure 1. The actions done by the strategic studies producer and user are

separated methodologically. The working sequence of the processes following one another makes the system composition. The system as a set of interrelated elements, including their numbering will also be used in the following paragraphs. The working stages structure as follows:

1. Strategic studies development process

- 1.1. Origin of a strategic study need
- 1.2. Systematic collection of information for the strategic study
- 1.3. Strategic study information analysis and classification
- 1.4. Strategic study fragments development and verification
- 1.5. Strategic study production

2. Strategic studies application process

- 2.1. Strategic study acceptance
- 2.2. Strategic study used in applications
- 2.3. Feedback statement for strategic study development process
- 2.4. Other applications of strategic studies
- 2.5. Statement of new needs for strategic studies

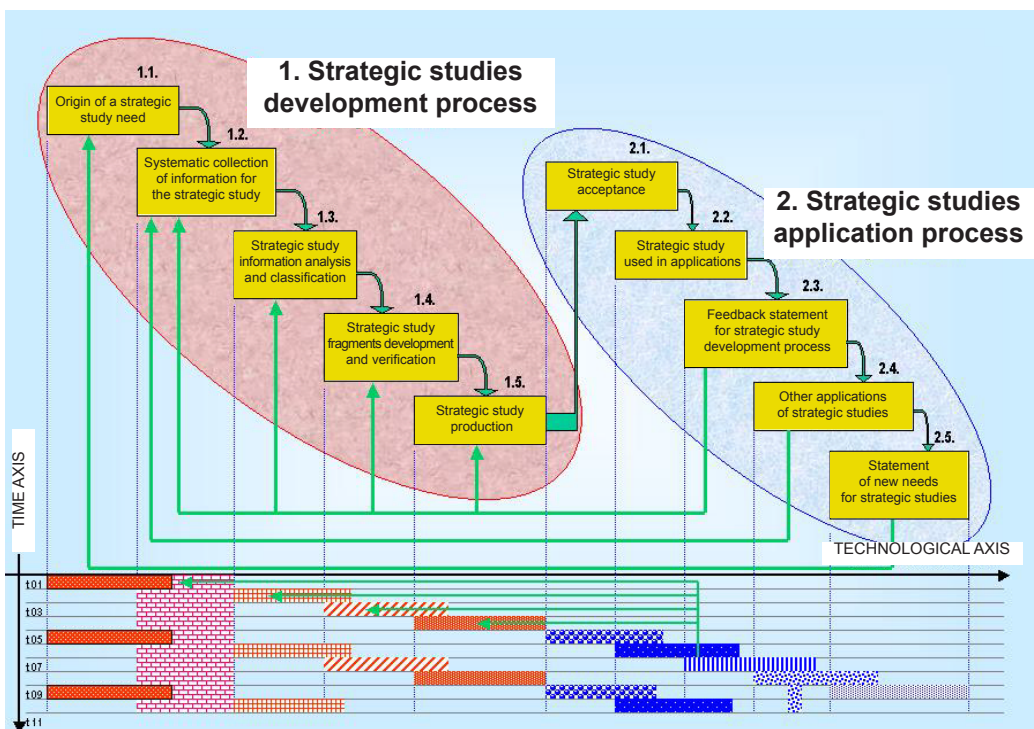


Figure 2: Scheme of strategic study working stage sequence

Figure 2 shows a scheme of strategic study working stage sequence introducing working and time axes to demonstrate the sequence and time flow of the working stages.

It also documents the specific position of continuous collection of information for strategic studies. The origin of the requirements is in fact undetermined in time, however the actions following within the strategic study process are strictly sequenced with the working step flow.

Sequencing is a characteristic feature of strategic study production. The conclusions are not thoughtful to be accepted unless the elements and their relations are considered for next development. The time slices shown in the time-axis (t_{01} , t_{03} , t_{05} ...), however the actual sizes are just examples. They will depend on topic and extent of the issues under assessment, amount of involved individuals, on employed methods (e.g. conferences, round tables, surveys, questionnaires or just consultation and analyses of monitored issues may offer a wider view; prognoses may require making pragmatic time series, calculations that use exact methods, etc.). The information availability, necessary additional specification, time available to the producer, producer's qualification, recipient's readiness and capability to learn the forecast results, and other factors may affect the actual time demand.

Remark: The following explanatory paragraphs on each working process element keep a unified structure of description: scheme stressing out the described element of the working process, element characteristics, inputs and outputs, other elements links.

1. STRATEGIC STUDIES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

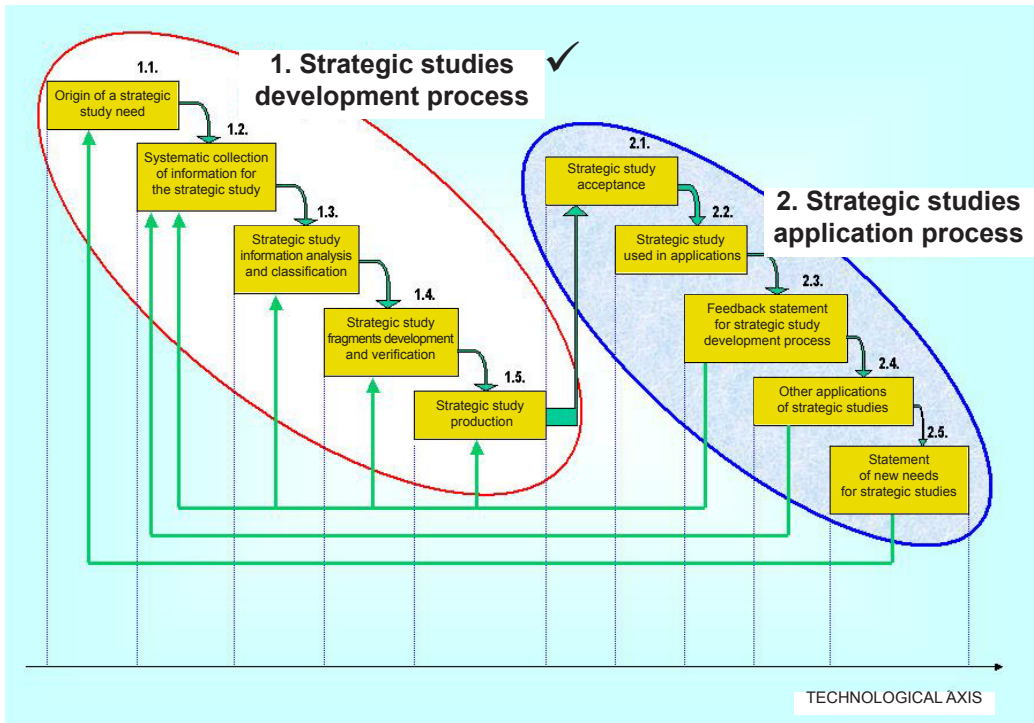


Figure 3: Element 1 of Scheme of strategic studies working stages

Element characteristics: Producer's main work in developing strategic studies that includes specification and selection of the strategic study orientation, continuous information collection and its specification, information analysis and classification, fragment verification, strategic study development, preparation for handing out to the users.

Inputs and outputs: Set of available information on the issue, capacity, technology and capability of the strategic study producer, strategic study users' interest. The output is the strategic studies in written form of a document and files of multimedia and comprehensive results acting in the actions while the strategic study is developed.

Links: Characteristic links are of the strategic study users and together to a wider systematic environment: collection of scientific knowledge on national security and defence, education of experts and citizens, planned processes in the society, and others.

1.1 Origin of a strategic study need

Element characteristics: The origin of strategic study needs is the working process entry that contains need realisation, discussion, consideration and order formulation. Based on particular conditions, this element may result from the following subjects' actions: strategic study producer (physical or legal entity), recipient or expected user, other physical or legal entity appropriately competent or interested.

The need origin may come from the following according the processes, in which the strategic studies are incorporated:

a) procedures and needs of the expected recipients/users for decision/making:

- decision-making sphere of national security/defence (President, Parliament, Government, National Security Council, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, General Staff, military Commands, etc.),
- international organisations or multinational subjects (UN, NATO, OSCE, EU, WEU, Viszegrad and others),
- other non-governmental organisations (e.g. PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes),
- political Parties and other subjects;

b) processes of cognition and knowledge development (for science or education purposes):

- producer's creative initiative to develop either particular issues or methods,
- based on other submitters requirements,
- to verify or simulate new methods,
- to develop science-based discussion on particular issues,
- to bring-up or recruit new scientists – future strategic study producers, students, lifelong education attendants,
- to develop presentation of attained knowledge;

c) necessary development of information on strategic security and defence issues:

- to provide citizens with general information,
- to enhance the essential, general information ground,
- to develop special information collection.

Empiric knowledge has showed that the need origin has unnecessarily always related to the acquaintance of existing potential producers. Various procedures have therefore been used according as those who originated the need have been aware of the potential producers or their capacity. The working stage consists in formulated need of strategic studies, usually in written form. The result is intended for the producers, and the producers should already participate in them. The origin of such submissions is a variant process with controllable procedures that include discussion and refinement of requirement instantiation. From creative point of view, the strategic study need origina-

ting process is very interesting. The principle is the competency of asking others and oneself questions leading to cognition of and denomination of what has not been learnt in past or at present and systematic development of questions that are crucial for cognition of and planning future.

Inputs and outputs: Clear idea of the individuals in key positions on the need of strategic guidance of practical national security and defence, realisation that there is no other feasible effect on planning and consistent adherence to long-term intention for the whole security system are the inputs. Clearly understood topic by the scientist who intends to use the past for deduction of knowledge that can be used in future is also an input. Another possibility is anything that allows development of the technique of prediction and effect on future in this field. A written document – submission for the producer – is the output.

Links: to the external environment, i.e. to the known or unknown subjects; to the results of the previous strategic studies, i.e. working element 2.5 at the input and to the working elements 1.2 information collection and implicitly to all processes of strategic study development (elements 1.3, 1.4, 1.5).

1.2 Systematic collection of information for the strategic study

Element characteristics: Collection of relevant information and information on information that can contribute to improved knowledge of defence and security or military issues regardless the media type. Classification, separation, filing and condition-making for effective providing of that information. Development of specific methods of pre-processing, processing, assessing and providing information. Preparation of technology, computer, conventional, personnel, funding, material, civil and other assets for practical work in continuous compilation of information sources. The strategic considerable information spreads without practical limits giving thus more importance to the working specialisation (especially in the distinguished strategic study institutions). It allows focused pre-processing of information, development of information methods to record the paths to the primary, secondary or tertiary information. This is the specialty of information scientists.

Inputs and outputs: Numeric, text, imagery, map, digital, sound or other information, general rules for information handling and guidance of strategic information collection, contacts to decisive authorities and access to their information, utilisation of foreign and national sources. The outputs are sets of collected, selected, classified and pre-processed information data, to include technical, computer or other type of access environment for strategic studies producers or other users.

Links: The characteristic links are to worldwide, national, non-government information systems including special and specialised systems. To packages of published periodicals and issue-related literature. Tailoring the range and specialisation of information collection is necessary based on specifications given by the production organisation management and on the available funds, personnel conditions or dislocation capacity.

The system working input links to the elements 1.1, 2.3, 2.4, output to 1.3 and consequently to 1.4, 1.5.

1.3 Strategic study information analysis and classification

Element characteristics: Decision on strategic study development by the producer and acceptance of particular planning documents. Focused selection and analysis of available information affected with the producing teams' or individuals' quality and knowledge. Development of their variants and preparation of information data files for following strategic studies production. Refinement of information needs and requesting them from the preceding element 1.2. The analysis working stage is done in two procedures: preliminary analysis and documentography of the acquired sources and specific source analysis. The former leads to general information and the latter to special information.

Inputs and outputs: strategic study submission, available information package, existing personnel capacity and producers ability, coping with methods necessary for prime strategic study production, time availability, material and financial sources. The pre-processed information fragments are the output and create a package of solutions that input the strategic study production final stage. The producers use to put the partial solutions under public review (conferences, colloquia, workshops, round tables, inquiries, opposition proceedings, consultations and so on) after having selected information.

Links: input – elements 1.1, 1.2, user's (recipient's) recommendations, inside control by processing plan. The information scientists should closely cooperate with the producers. The output links firstly to element 1.4 that verifies partial solutions.

1.4 Strategic study fragments development and verification

Element characteristics: The producers verify, modify, complete the strategic study fragments with various forms, procedures or techniques according to the range and nature of the studies under implementation. Due to the fact that information input of a large amount and complexity of the security issues under consideration prevent the results, conclusions or recommendations from being explicit as the study purpose is a significant factor, discussion on the issues to verify is an unavoidable phase of such forms of work. In fact, the discussion purpose is producer's output proofreading and conclusion presentation preparation. There, the efficiency of methods and arrangements for the technical discussion, conferences or various verification methods in regard of the complexity of issues under consideration shows up. Development of the internal control of the production plan obeisance is also important.

Inputs and outputs: The inputs are packages of information fragments that are pre-processed with both exact and verbal methods to make topics to be verified. As a rule, they are controlled data time series for exact methods, fundamentals for conferences, seminars etc. The results of conferences, seminars, data processing, packages of

scenarios or information fundamentals for the strategic study production final phase are the outputs.

Links: The inputs to elements 1.1 and 1.3 while experience or requirement effect from the part of recipients and users is expected. The outputs to the resulting study, element 1.5 and some of experience shows out that should reflect in the results presentation process.

1.5 Strategic study production

Element characteristics: The creative part of the strategic study production process based on prepared and verified information for the expected recipients and users. The study content issues from the switch of the current status based on analyses to future variants. There is an additional requirement of historic strategic studies to determine a new piece of knowledge to apply, if appropriate. The product subjects to judgmental system and proper corrections. Usually, preparations and arrangements for presentation material and actions are attached. The system bases on producers quality and information quality and verification.

Inputs and outputs: Strategic study fragments, fundamentals and information packages, discussion results on the issue, results of analytical and prognostic methods and experiments, producers' knowledge and experience are the input. Strategic study intended for the recipient, usually including presentation documents is the output.

Links: It is the result of the production teamwork to sum up the working plan. The output is handed out to strategic studies application process beside the producer. It relates to element 1.4 and inputs 2.1.

2. STRATEGIC STUDIES APPLICATION PROCESS

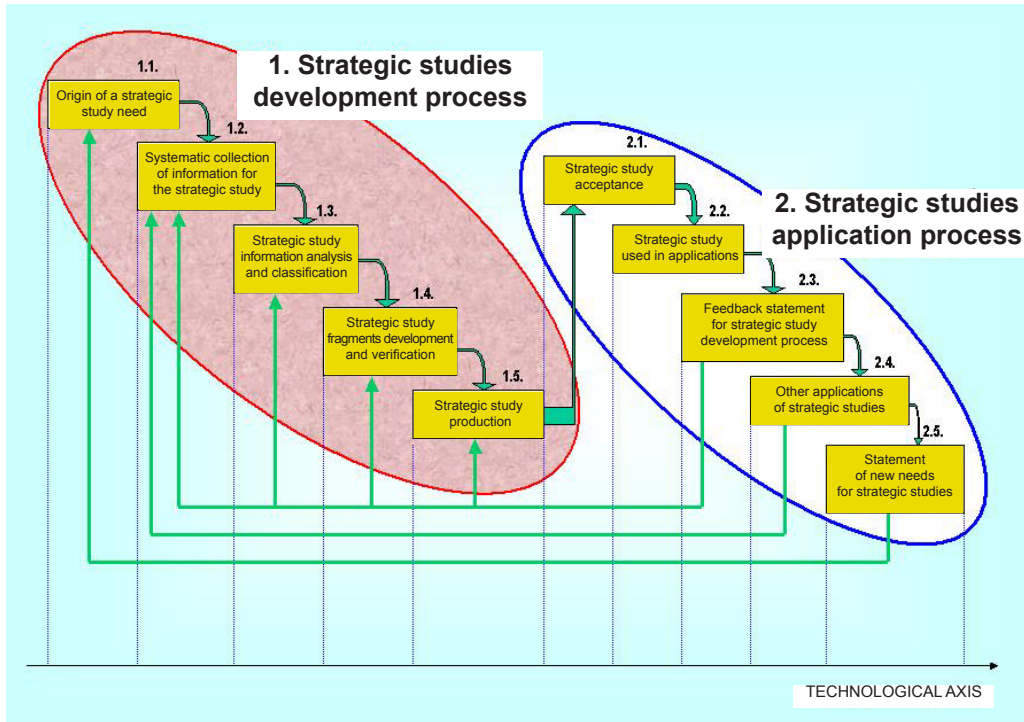


Figure 9: Element 2 of Scheme of strategic studies working stages

Element characteristics: The strategic study recipient's and user's primary deal is to understand material, to analyse own application capacity, to incorporate into own planning and to practically implement applied knowledge. Also, to improve the future processes of security and defence measures it includes specification and selection of next strategic studies topics in relation to the producer, promotion of knowledge and system feedback.

Inputs and outputs: Strategic studies, strategic studies users' readiness. Output – implemented strategic studies reflected in users' changed knowledge and cognition, accepted plans and strategies of attaining changes in future, distinct level of scientific knowledge, education process and effect on future.

Links: The characteristic links lead to the strategic studies producers, as well as to the broad environment system: scientific knowledge packages on national security and defence, education of experts and citizens, planning processes in society etc.

2.1 Strategic study acceptance

Element characteristics: The strategic study primary acceptance by the recipient is the merit. This working element expects strategic study producer's participation in a suitable form. Based on recipient's knowledge it brings ways of attained results presentation and their estimated application forms for users' needs. The production subject is active, though the more is the study recipient entity that should read it and somehow identify with it. The working step is relatively time consuming to cover the necessary time to acquaint the strategic study beside time for results application.

Inputs and outputs: Strategic study, recipient's readiness, presentation methods. Output – level of study understanding that reflects in the following stage when knowledge is practically applied.

Links: to elements 1.5 and 2.2 to include recipient's improved personal knowledge for both individual and legal entities.

2.2 Strategic study used in applications

Element characteristics: Some or all information from the strategic studies may be incorporated or involved into the documents made by the recipient. The appropriate physical or legal entity is responsible for the information application following certain policy. Such a decision may advise other colleagues to get acquainted with the study, recommend the knowledge for incorporation into education, enhance requirements of the planning procedures theoretical fundamentals scientific work, develop a theory or practical measures. Recipient is determining the application recommendation. The working stage bases in exploitation of data, information and knowledge and procedures from the strategic study to the working procedures of making practical plans, decisions, concepts, measures and developing theory of national security and defence.

Inputs and outputs: Strategic studies, other data, information and knowledge on the defence and security issues are the applied use procedure inputs. The strategic studies use output is the decisions, plans and measure packages made and applied by the recipient.

Links: Element 2.1 links to a whole structure of the expected processing and exploitation of the strategic study. Element 2.3 concentrates knowledge taken from this working stage.

2.3 Feedback statement for strategic study development process

Element characteristics: After having applied the strategic studies, the users (recipients) are obliged to write recommendations for their producers to make feedback to each phase of the strategic study development process. The strategic study producers or user representatives may initiate this procedure, or an independent consultation agency may be hired.

Inputs and outputs: Input – documents on applied use of study, such as data series in future status prognosis computer-aided processing that should review information validity, accuracy and integrity and feed the producers with mostly negative experience. Output – package of documents that revise the production methods.

Links: Application mostly to element 2.2, feedback to 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5. Especially written form of materials is covered also under 2.4. They affect also element 2.5 that recommends new production of strategic studies.

2.4 Other applications of strategic studies

Element characteristics: This working stage opens free application of already applied strategic studies the recipient released for broad unplanned usage to that moment. It covers availability of the first assessment and application results that can complete the information sources. All the facts may bring new knowledge and practical enrichment in unexpected ways.

Inputs and outputs: Strategic studies, their application, statements of recommendation for feedback, recipient's decision are inputs. The output consists of documents provided for other use.

Links: issue from the working elements 2.2, 2.3 and should lead to enforcement of information sources (1.2) and general usage should help element 2.5.

2.5 Statement of new needs for strategic studies

Element characteristics: Strategic study recipient or user's interest may result in new needs statement. This requires adherence to certain principles and procedures applicable to writing documents. They might give new orientation, new submissions, specified working processes, discussion methods requirements, additional information and other for the strategic study research.

Inputs and outputs: The input is made of the previous stages of the strategic study application process, along with new needs and practical requirements. The output is made of documents that contribute to strategic study need origin offered to the producers for utilisation.

Links: It is synthetic effect of elements 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 on the strategic study recipients, access from the external environment and recipient's subjective factors used in result statement. The result orients to the input of working element 1.1.

3. CONCLUSION

Strategic studies done in favour of national security and defence should be understood being far from a one-shot ad hoc activity. The paper outlines the elementary framework for closer explanation of the systematic policy that should improve reasonable creation of sustainable work in national defence and security objective fundamentals. Practical work on the studies is described in the form of working process that uses sure continuous flow of information input of classified or unclassified nature. Information derived from the development of situation and knowledge of political, military, source, science, technology or technical relations of national security and defence requires durable classification, selection and assessment. They are subject to generalisation and abstraction in necessary rate prior to application.

The major process that has the never-ending work character is “systematic collection of information for strategic studies”. That’s due to its multiple use in making variant amount of the final studies in accordance with the needs of knowledge and practical development. It creates the treasury of information, data, methods, working procedures, international and science experience, contacts, activity review, similar issues covered in past or at present, prognostic procedures and scenarios and many other aspects that allow knowledge objectification and presentation of the strategic study results. This process closely approximates the methods of information science being possibly developed in a separate science discipline of distinctive practical comprehension.

The process of producing and using strategic studies is a technique applicable to the level of an individual as well as of working teams or even institutions. The working process is not one-sided to comprise both the producer and the result recipient. The individual working elements are described in a structured way paying more attention to the origin of a strategic study need only. The working elements are interconnected with links to make a working system that could be considered a production line.

The attitude that considers the production line needs allows understanding of consequences necessary to attain the required knowledge. It also allows understanding of applicable policy of information preparation for irregular meeting the needs of random and regular users coming from the community of researchers, military and government administration representatives, students and security members.

The view of strategic studies from the working process position has resulted from many years of writer’s empiric cognition and generalised practical experience learnt from his contributions to strategic studies production and to leading working teams and a Strategic Study Institute department. However, it covers just the structure of the process leaving untouched the quantification of each working element or detailed process analysis. It expresses one possible step of many to improve the cognition theory of the strategic study phenomenon of practical national security and defence.