

THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF DOCUMENTING THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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Abstract

In the modern world order, Armenia seeks to balance its relations with neighboring countries, regional powers, and international actors while simultaneously pursuing its own national interests and security objectives. In this context, Armenia develops and implements its security policy, which is multifaceted in nature and covers various spheres and levels. Ensuring national security is the fundamental task of security policy, which pursues the implementation of such goals as not only protection from threats directed against the survival of the nation, statehood, strengthening and development of public and political life, but also the planning and implementation of unified and coordinated mechanisms to prevent them.

In the past years, various security documents have been adopted in the Republic of Armenia, which, being aimed at ensuring security, have not actually ensured the comprehensive regulation of the issues outlined therein in terms of implementation. Among such security documents, the national security strategy stands out first of all. In this context, one of the important issues in the development of a national security strategy is the choice of a specific methodology. The following two methods are distinguished as the main directions:

- systemic establishment of national security and the creation of sectoral strategies based on it and
- the development of separate sectoral strategies and the creation of a single comprehensive document by generalizing them. The first method has actually been used in Armenia. The article examines methodological issues of developing a national security strategy. The results of a comparative analysis of the documentation of national security strategies of the Republic of Armenia for 2007 and 2020 are presented.

Keywords: national security, strategy, methodology, political goal, ultimate goal, analysis.

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱԶԳԱՅԻՆ ԱՆՎՏԱՆԳՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՌԱԶՄԱՎԱՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՓԱՍՏԱԹՂԹԱՎՈՐՄԱՆ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԸ

ԲԱԳՐԱՏ ԲԱԳՐԱՏՅԱՆ

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ փիլիսոփայության, սոցիոլոգիայի և
իրավունքի ինստիտուտի հայցորդ
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Համառոտագիր

Արդի աշխարհակարգում Հայաստանը ձգտում է հավասարակշռել իր հարաբերությունները հարևան երկրների, տարածաշրջանային տերությունների և միջազգային դերակատարների հետ՝ միաժամանակ հետապնդելով սեփական ազգային շահերը և անվտանգային նպատակները: Այս համատեքստում Հայաստանը մշակում և իրականացնում է իր անվտանգության քաղաքականությունը, որն ունի բազմակողմանի բնույթ և ընդգրկում է տարբեր ոլորտներ ու մակարդակներ: Ազգային անվտանգության ապահովումն անվտանգային քաղաքականության հիմնարար խնդիրն է, որը հետամուտ է այնպիսի նպատակների իրականացմանը, ինչպիսիք են՝ ոչ միայն ազգի գոյապահպանության, պետականության, հասարակական-քաղաքական կյանքի ամրապնդման ու զարգացման դեմ ուղղված սպառնալիքներից պաշտպանություն, այլ նաև դրանք կանխարգելող միասնական ու համակարգված կառուցակարգերի նախատեսում և իրագործում:

Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունում անցած տարիների ընթացքում ընդունվել են տարբեր անվտանգային փաստաթղթեր, որոնք, նպատակաուղղված լինելով անվտանգության ապահովմանը, կատարողականության առումով փաստացի չեն ապահովել դրանցով նախանշված խնդիրների համընդգրկուն կարգավորումը: Այդպիսի անվտանգային փաստաթղթերի շարքում առաջին հերթին առանձնանում է ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարությունը: Այս համատեքստում ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարության մշակման կարևոր հարցերից է կոնկրետ մեթոդաբանության ընտրությունը: Որպես հիմնական ուղղություններ՝ առանձնացվում են հետևյալ երկու եղանակները. ազգային անվտանգության համակարգային կայացում, դրա հիման վրա ոլորտային ռազմավարությունների ստեղծում և առանձին ոլորտային ռազմավարությունների մշակում, դրանց համընդհանրացմամբ մեկ ամբողջական փաստաթղթի ստեղծում: Հայաստանում փաստացի կիրառվել է առաջին եղանակը: Այս հոդվածում քննարկվում են ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարության մշակման մեթոդաբանական հիմնահարցերը: Ներկայացվում են 2007 և 2020 թվականների Հայաստանի Հանրապետության ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարությունների միջև փաստաթղթավորման համեմատական վերլուծության արդյունքները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ ազգային անվտանգություն, ռազմավարություն, մեթոդաբանություն, քաղաքական նպատակ, վերջնանպատակ, վերլուծություն:

Introduction

In the substantive clarifications on security, its observation at different levels is emphasized, in this regard, according to the spheres, it is distinguished: political, economic, military, cultural, etc. According to the subject, three levels are distinguished: individual, society and state, which are functionally closely interconnected and complement each other. For example, state or national security is called upon to ensure the interests of the individual and its collective manifestation, society. Therefore, the individual, society and state pursue collective interests from the perspective of ensuring the security triangle. This is also present in the definition of national security: “a state of protection of the vital interests of the individual, family, society and state from real and potential external and internal threats, which is ensured by the military, political, economic, social and other capabilities of the state” (Chilingaryan & Erznkryan, 2015, p. 34, in Arm.).

In the context of national security, one of the important issues is its institutionalization, when state security, as a system with its components and subsystems, functions effectively. From the perspective of fixing and regulating the above-mentioned approaches, the development of strategic documents is also essential hierarchical classifications, culture and development methodology (Buzan, 1983, p. 36–37). In this regard, strategic documents, if we classify them according to size and importance, we can mention the following:

- national (development) program,
- national security strategy,
- national ideology (national dream),
- conceptual documents,
- doctrinal documents and
- multi-sector program documents, etc.

Theoretical and Methodological Bases

Issues of development, modernization and effectiveness of the security policy of the Republic of Armenia have always been in the focus of immediate attention of public and political circles. Various security documents have been adopted for years, which, being aimed at regulating security issues, were often of a formal nature and had numerous problems in theoretical and practical terms.

In general, the culture of drafting strategic documents is practically important, first of all, taking into account the fact that its development and the adoption of advanced experience contribute to the institutionalization of the national security of the Republic of Armenia as a complex system. Then, the documentation of security issues in political reality allows us to gradually form our own culture of drafting strategic security documents.

The drafting of strategic documents is one of the most important functions of the political leadership of any state. The methodology for drafting strategic documents, their content and form have their own characteristics in different states, which is due to the civilizational, historical and political-state culture characteristic of these states (Lincke, 2015, p. 103). In this regard, the experience of drafting such documents in some Western states (USA, Great Britain, Canada,

etc.) can be considered advanced. This is due to the fact that, first of all, these states have accumulated a correspondingly rich experience, along with a special development methodology. At the same time, two fundamental directions of the methodology are used: threat-based and goal-based (Brandon, 2017). Although in any case, factors such as danger, threat, challenge, risk, etc. are taken into account. Moreover, a rich methodological toolkit for assessing and analyzing security concepts has also been developed and modernized in these states (Kugler, 2006, p. 35). For example, in the practice of the United States, there are serious mechanisms for assessing risks, preventing dangers and repelling threats. They are, of course, different in different states, but they are still aimed at solving the same type of security problems.

The development of a national security strategy (NSS) is a complex and long-term process, in which it is essential to take into account all the nuances and mutual connections and interactions. At the same time, the basis for the development of the NSS is the interconnection and meaning-making of the present and the future, aimed at the transition from the current state to a more desirable, favorable situation. This new situation is the political goal of national security, to achieve which it is planned to focus feasible efforts on a capability-based basis. Therefore, in the development of the national security strategy, competitive advantages are emphasized, which can emerge in competitions of different nature, for example, between nation-states, ethnic units, non-governmental and other actors. In the case of the Republic of Armenia, we believe that it is more appropriate to use the term “documentation” instead of the concept of “NSS development methodology”. This is due to a number of circumstances. First, the documentation of the process is a purely technical formal process, and then it is mainly characteristic of the RA security policy documents, since the above-mentioned methodological components are almost absent in them (Freedman, 2013, p. 491).

The history of the process of developing the RA National Security Strategy indicates that it is not so much connected with the processes preceding the declaration of independence and the formation of statehood. In fact, the first copy of the NSS in the RA was created in 2007, which has not undergone any substantive updates for about 14 years (until 2020).

However, the problem is not only its formal updates. We believe that it is more important to analyze and understand the circumstances of what strategic direction and vision the Republic of Armenia had as an independent and sovereign state until 2007, the experience of the first NSS. This is especially important for conducting a substantive assessment and analysis of the process of developing strategic documents (Gompert et al., 2008, p. 34–35). Although this can be explained by the lack of approaches to the strategic development of the state among the military-political elites of the Republic of Armenia, and the general failure to form multi-sector elites, which was not a crisis of groupthink, but the failures of Armenia as a collective institution of the state.

At the same time, it is worth noting that during that period, the formation of the RA NSS did not have such a substantive vital perception, demand and prerequisites for implementation, as in the case of the most developed countries

of the world, for example, Great Britain or USA. Moreover, the definition of the concept of “national security of the Republic of Armenia” is given not within the framework of a strategic document, but within the framework of the law “On National Security Agencies of the Republic of Armenia”, which has a service meaning, which states that: “The national security of the Republic of Armenia is such a system of the state and society, when the security of the individual, society and the state, the territorial integrity of the country, sovereignty, constitutional order, the normal development of the economy, the protection of the material and spiritual values of society, the rights and freedoms of citizens, and the environment from internal and external threats are ensured” (the Law of the Republic of Armenia on National Security Agencies, 2002).

One of the important methodological stages of developing a national security strategy is the analysis and assessment of the NSS development process. In general, periodic review and evaluation of any process makes it possible to constantly make adjustments to the activity and not deviate from the main path that has been planned and should lead to the intended end goal. Naturally, the role of strategists is very important in terms of participating in this process, influencing it and making decisions. By the way, in connection with the widespread “tactician–strategist” differences, it can be said that “a tactician is a person who must know what to do when there is something to do, and a strategist, on the contrary, must know what to do when there is nothing to do.” (Paquette, 2002, p. 102–103). Such a statement emphasizes the importance of demonstrating creative approaches by a strategist (strategy developer), since the resolution of the problems faced depends on the solutions he offers for any, especially crisis, situations.

In the process of compiling security documents of the Republic of Armenia and especially in the development of the National Security Strategy, the issues of the presence and/or absence of methodology are emphasized. This refers to the above-mentioned security methodological components, strategic logic and the role of assessment and analysis in general. In this context, we believe that due to the lack of methodology, in the case of the National Security Strategy of 2007 and 2020, it is more correct to use the term documentation. This is also due to the fact that the documentation process may not have a methodological functional basis. The problem of the method is especially manifested in the absence of political goals and special or secondary goals aimed at their implementation. In any case, the issues related to the purpose of the two National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia, which are available to a wide range of public and expert circles, are open, there are a number of vague formulations, which are at least unacceptable in the case of such serious documents. The other is the absence of the institute of strategists and the problems of its establishment. By the way, by strategists, we do not mean employees of state departments who participate in the process of developing the NSS by chance or by chance, or those representatives of the expert community who have very universal professional abilities and, despite understanding everything, are unable to solve specific specialized problems.

At the same time, the absence of the role of strategists can be attributed to the absence of elements of strategic logic in the process of developing the RA NSS, the absence of strategic thinking, and in general, the inability to provide

solutions to a number of vital issues at the tactical level.

The next methodological problem is the vague and mixed formulations of the security concepts of “means”, “mode” and “ultimate goal”. In particular, it is not clearly stated what resources we have in the process of developing the RA NSS, based on which the political goals of the RA can be defined, and in general, by what methods we should achieve their implementation.

The lack of clarification of the ultimate goal within the framework of the RA NSS also carries significant risks, which allows deviation from the ultimate goal in the process of developing the NSS or their subjective interpretations by strategists, even leading to a departure from the defined political goals. Moreover, it can create fertile ground for evading responsibility in the event of any positive or negative results and maneuvering the consequences to present them as a desired result.

As already mentioned, for years (until the first attempt in 2007), ensuring the national security of the Republic of Armenia seemed to be of a subjective initiative, imitative and tactical nature. At the same time, the implementation of this process took place through other legal and legislative documents (the Law of the Republic of Armenia on National Security Agencies, 2002; the Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Formation and Activities of the Security Council, 2018). This, of course, contains a number of explosive problems, which are especially dangerous for countries that, like the Republic of Armenia, being in a de facto war, have not had a strategic development direction and vision for a long time.

Research Methods

To better understand the issues of documenting strategic fundamentals, let us try to conduct a comparative analysis between the two (2007 and 2020) National Strategic Plans of the Republic of Armenia (Decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia No. NH-37-N of February 7, 2007 “On Approval of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia”, 2007; National security strategy of the Republic of Armenia: A Resilient Armenia in a changing world, 2020). Of course, there are many comparison criteria, but let us try to address the most important ones.

Results

Within the framework of the 2007 RA NSS, a number of security threats are identified, which are classified as internal, external, regional, international, etc., but it is not specified where they were derived from, that is, it is not clear what assessment and analysis mechanisms were used, as a result of which, for example, the weakening of the Diaspora’s national and cultural identity or the disruption of transit routes of bordering states are considered national security threats. If such threat assessment mechanisms do not exist or have not been applied, then it can be argued that in the context of ensuring national security, perhaps they are dangers, risks or challenges. The same methodological problem is also present in the case of the 2020 RA NSS, although the main threats are not clearly indicated in separate sections here, the logic of the strategic assessment of their derivation again remains unknown. Moreover, in the context of the 2020 RA NSS, the main

threats are derived from the Republic of Azerbaijan and nothing significant is said about Turkey. We believe that this circumstance should be subjected to at least a radical review after the last 44-day war and the developments that followed. At the same time, the question arises as to why the factor of the Turkish military-political threat was not properly assessed and analyzed at the strategic level until then.

The next aspect concerns national interests. If in the case of the 2007 RA National Strategy, national interests were not clearly expressed as such and only the fundamental values of the RA were mentioned, then in the case of the 2020 RA National Strategy, national interests are enshrined in a separate section, but different substantive questions arise here. In particular, are the provisions mentioned in the 2020 RA National Strategy rightfully considered the national interests of the RA or how are they classified as vital or marginal interests? Moreover, we believe that classifying national interests in the RA National Strategy in a separate section was not only a lack of necessary expertise and professional experience, but also a purely formal fixation.

As for the concept of “fundamental national values”, which is enshrined in the two RA NSS with different approaches, this is also a wrong approach, since an objective question arises as to whether the values not included in that classification are national or not. Therefore, it would be more correct to state that the national values of the Republic of Armenia begin with, but are not limited to, the following provisions.

Another problem is that, unlike the 2007 RA NSS, in the case of the 2020 strategy, issues of democracy, human rights and peace occupy a significant part of the content. There is also a cursory reference to this in the 2007 RA NSS. However, within the framework of the 2020 RA, these approaches seem to deviate from logic, being presented as the fundamental national interests of the Republic of Armenia. Moreover, in the 2020 The RA NSS contains inappropriate formulations regarding neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan, where it is literally stated that the regression of democracy and human rights in these states creates serious obstacles to further national and regional cooperation and security. We believe that this hypothesis is at least an unfounded approach.

The next one concerns the issues of the security and well-being of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia. In both RA NSS, these ideas are incidental and have vague formulations. In particular, in the case of the 2007 RA NSS, these issues are addressed at the end of the strategy. This is strange because the NSS of a number of developed Western countries (USA, UK, Germany, etc.) are based on ensuring the rights and well-being of the human-citizen. The reason is very simple: the second of the three levels of national security, the security of society, and the third, the security of the state, are not ends in themselves and are aimed at protecting the interests of the first level, the individual, in this case the citizen (Williams, 2013, p. 279).

As for the final provisions, there are also commonalities and peculiarities here. Both RA NSS state that the NSS, as a fundamental strategic document, should take precedence over other state documents of strategic significance, and that state officials should make statements, act at least and not contradict the

fundamental provisions of the RA NSS. The main peculiarity regarding the final provisions is the issue of updating the RA NSS. And if in the case of 2007, only the dynamic processes taking place in the world and the region are considered as prerequisites for updating, then in the case of 2020, the implementation of changes no later than every five years is added to this. We believe that both approaches are artificial and give those implementing the updates room for maneuver. Therefore, if no later than every five years is mentioned, it should not be a purely technical process, but the need to introduce substantive changes with the presence of political will.

Conclusions

In summary, we note that in the context of the process and final result of the development of the RA NSS, the issues of content, form and its implementation are also important. In particular, in a number of countries (USA, UK, RF), this document is a set of clearly formulated security problems and concerted efforts aimed at their solution. In other words, NSS, essentially arising from current realities and processes, should indicate the desired vision in which a number of substantive problems are more effectively resolved. In fact, the basis for the development of such documents is the idea of “form follows content” or “form complements content”. By saying this, we do not mean at all that form is not essential in the process of developing the RA NSS; in general, form is the main means of expressing content and is of very important importance. For example, in the case of the USA (The White House, 2017) and Great Britain (Cabinet Office of Great Britain, 2015), they are vivid examples of the combination of content and form of the NSS.

The problem is that the priorities included in the structure of the NSS content are fully presented with unique technical and stylistic approaches, which makes it possible to make the presented material more attractive. Of course, in such fundamental strategic documents, the actual message/content is much more important, but let's not forget that in the implementation of the goal, how we say it (the form), what methodology and stages we choose for its perception and implementation are no less important. The latter is also an integral part of the content-form discourse. This is due to the fact that in countries of the level of the Republic of Armenia, unlike, for example, a number of Western countries, NSS were formal in terms of the practical significance of the documents, focusing purely on the idea of having a document. Therefore, it is no coincidence that until 2007. The Republic of Armenia did not have a NSS at all.

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