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The practice of Grand Strategy in Britain and Spain

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Abstract:

Grand Strategy is an unpopular idea, often considered both “imperialistic” and unfit for the current, extremely complex, world. However, if effectively implemented, current-day National Security Strategies (NSS) may amount to Grand Strategies. This article aims to re-discover what Grand Strategy is and why it is still a valuable tool for medium-sized states like Britain and Spain today. To do so, it first proposes a definition of Grand Strategy based on the three core elements of any strategy: ends, ways and means. Then it establishes seven conditions to assess whether a country can be recognised to “do” Grand Strategy. Finally, it applies these criteria to the most recent British and Spanish NSS documents and their respective implementation. The conclusion shows that the UK is considerably close to the practice of Grand Strategy, while Spain still has a long way to go.

Keywords:

Grand Strategy, Britain, United Kingdom, Spain, national security, National Security Strategy.

Grand Strategy is often considered an "imperial" and "hubristic" idea[1] which, when is put into practice, frequently does not work[2]. However, it would be untrue to say that Grand Strategy is a useless concept. This article aims to rediscover what Grand Strategy is. While there is a widespread opinion according to which strategy –let alone *Grand* Strategy- "is dead"[3], and that the best strategy "is not having a strategy"[4], it will be argued that the practice of Grand Strategy in the 21st century is not only possible but also relatively common and valuable for medium-sized states. Taking as a starting point what is generally assumed, this essay will critically assess the contention that Britain and Spain do not do Grand Strategy. The thesis presented here is that Britain is in fact considerably close to the practice of Grand Strategy. To underline this, a comparison will be established with Spain, whose approach to strategy was inspired by that of the UK[5]. However, before looking at the two countries in the third section, the first one will try to define what Grand Strategy, an elusive concept, is. On its turn, the second section will consider under which specific conditions a country can be said to be doing Grand Strategy. The criteria found will be applied in the third section both to the UK and Spain.

What Grand Strategy is

While Lawrence Freedman argues that "everybody needs a strategy"[6], this study focuses on a very distinct and specific type of strategy: Grand Strategy[7]. If plain strategy is a matter of interrelating *ends* and *means*[8] in specific *ways* so that the means are directed towards the achievement of the ends[9], Grand Strategy does the same but specifically aims to achieve "large ends"[10].

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[1] HOUSE OF COMMONS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SELECT COMMITTEE, "Who Does UK National Strategy? First Report of Session 2010–11 (HC435)", The Stationery Office, London, at p. 3
[2] BETTS, Richard K, "Is Strategy an Illusion?", International Security, 25(2), 2000
[3] STRACHAN, Hew, "The Direction of War", Cambridge University Press, 2003, at p. 41
[4] GASKARTH, Jamie, "Strategy in a Complex World", The RUSI Journal, 160(6), 2015, at p. 4
[5] BALLESTEROS Martín, Miguel Ángel, "En Busca de una Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional", Ministerio de Defensa, Madrid, 2016, at p. 304
[6] FREEDMAN, Lawrence, "Strategy: A History", Oxford University Press, 2013, at p. ix
[7] LAYTON, Peter, "The Idea of Grand Strategy", The RUSI Journal, 157(4), 2012, at p. 56
[8] US Marine Corps, "Strategy: Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-1", Cosimo Books, New York, 2007, at p. 37
[9] FREEDMAN (above no. 6), at p. xi
[10] GADDIS, John Lewis."What is Grand Strategy?", Karl Von Der Heyden Distinguished Lecture, Duke University, 26 February 2009

Grand Strategy is "large" -or "grand"- in three different dimensions. First, largeness refers to the actor that does Grand Strategy: generally, when authors talk about Grand Strategy they talk about the state[11]. While some scholars have considered that only the most powerful states can do Grand Strategy[12], doing it is in fact particularly relevant for relatively weak states, or for those that are medium-sized[13]. As they have fewer resources, they must use them more carefully. A meaningful Grand Strategy is precisely one that maximises the benefits derived from the available resources[14].

Second, in Grand Strategy largeness also refers to the type of goals pursued. Grand Strategy specifically serves the highest policy objectives of a nation. This has three important consequences: first, Grand Strategy can only be done once "politics have produced a policy"[15]; second, it is only possible to do Grand Strategy at the "highest level of government"[16]; and third, Grand Strategy necessarily uses a wide array of instruments of national power[17], instead of being limited to a single tool -traditionally the military.

Finally, largeness expresses the timeframe with which Grand Strategy operates: while strategy is inherently forward-looking, Grand Strategy is in addition long-termed[18]. Thus, Grand Strategy makes possible something that plain strategy cannot provide. Thanks to its longer-term vision, in Grand Strategy resources are not only applied[19], but also developed and allocated to particular units[20].

Following these three dimensions, it can be said that all states do, to some extent, Grand Strategy. However, Colin Gray affirms that those states that have an explicit Grand Strategy achieve a greater degree of cohesion in their actions and therefore increase their

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[11] GRAY, Colin S.,"The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice", Oxford University Press, 2010. See also LAYTON (above no.7) and GADDIS (above no. 10)
[12] MURRAY, Williamson, "Thoughts on Grand Strategy and the United States in the Twenty-first Century", Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, 13(1), 2010, at p. 75
[13] RASMUSSEN, Mikkel, "The Architecture of Strategic Choice", The RUSI Journal, 160(6), 2015, at p. 32
[14] BETTS (above no. 2), at p. 6
[15] GRAY (above no. 11), at p. 28
[16] LAYTON (above no. 7), at p. 57
[17] BALLESTEROS (above no. 5), at p.14
[18] STRACHAN, Hew, "Strategy and Contingency", International Affairs 87(6), 2011, at p. 1282
[19] DEIBEL, Terry L, "Foreign Affairs Strategy: Logic for American Statecraft", Cambridge University Press, 2007, at p. 5
[20] LAYTON (above no. 7), at p. 58

"likelihood of success"[21]. A particular way to make Grand Strategy explicit is through the national security approach, a practice started by the US in the 1980s[22] that entails the preparation of a National Security Strategy (NSS). Following authors like Layton and Strachan, Grand Strategy and NSS are synonymous[23]. The only difference is that a NSS focuses on a particular ultimate end, while Grand Strategy lefts the question of the highest policy priorities more open. In particular, the NSS aims to "the achievement of national security"[24], this is, the safeguard of the nation's core values[25], or at least achieving a state in which the probability of them being damaged is low[26]. While some of the core values are arguably the same for all states (e.g., territorial integrity), the national security approach allows every nation to define its complete set of core values. For the purposes of this essay, a NSS will be considered a document of prescriptive value for Grand Strategy. On its turn, "doing" Grand Strategy will require the effective implementation of what the NSS establishes. Therefore, from the fact that both the UK and Spain have recently published NSS documents does not necessarily derive that they "do" Grand Strategy.

Conditions for doing Grand Strategy

This section tries to establish a set of observable conditions to assess whether a country does Grand Strategy. The seven conditions proposed below are based on the three fundamental characteristics of any strategy: ends, ways and means. If a country is to do Grand Strategy, it must direct these three elements consistently with the characteristics of Grand Strategy proposed in section I.

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[21] GRAY (above no. 11), at p. 28
[22] It was in 1986 when the President of the US was required by Congress to publish regularly a National Security Strategy. WORMLEY, Michael A. "Steady Security: Consistency in National Security Strategy Ends", Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2010, at p. 2
[23] LAYTON (above no. 7), at p. 57 and STRACHAN (above no. 18), at p. 1281
[24] Ibid, at p. 57
[25] LIPPMANN, Walter, "US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic", Little Brown, Boston, 1943, at p. 51; WOLFERS, Arnold, "'National Security'" as an Ambiguous Symbol", Political Science Quarterly, 67(4), 1952, at p. 484
[26] BALDWIN, David A, "The Concept of Security", Review of International Studies, 1997, at p. 13

Ends: Identity and vision for the future

Any strategy has a pre-requisite: an end to be achieved[27]. If the NSS has to protect the "core values" of a nation, policy-makers have first of all to answer a question: what kind of country do they want, and have the capacities, to be?[28]. Grand Strategy is only possible when the identity of the country is well defined (condition 1a), as it is this identity what provides both the starting point and the point of arrival necessary for having a meaningful "route map" (the Grand Strategy). Therefore, the country has also to define a realistic vision of itself for the future (condition 1b). This leads on its turn to a second conclusion: Grand Strategy is per se forward-looking, not reactive. A NSS exclusively based on an opportunistic approach that prescribes adaptation to the changing environment[29] is not Grand Strategy. Likewise, a risk-management approach focused only on the prevention, minimisation and recovery from damage cannot amount to Grand Strategy, as it is a means-centred, not ends-centred, strategy, through which it is not possible to "go" anywhere (condition 2).

Ways: the Governmental machinery for Grand Strategy

If the preparation and implementation of the NSS is entrusted to second-level governmental bodies, such as the Ministry of Defence, the outcome will probably lack the comprehensive vision that Grand Strategy requires. This is why authors usually distinguish between NSS and second-level or sectorial strategies[30]. Grand Strategy has to be done from a body placed at the highest political level and specifically conceived to address matters of national strategy (condition 3). In addition, the existence of such organ is not enough: it must have an effective capacity to coordinate the rest of governmental bodies relevant for national security, in accordance with the NSS document (condition 4).

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[27] BRODIE, Bernard, "War and Politics", Macmillan, New York, 1973, at p. 452
[28] KENNEDY, Paul, ed., "Grand Strategies in War and Peace", Yale University Press, 1991, at p. 168
[29] LAYTON (above no. 7), at p. 59
[30] See for instance GRAY (above no. 11), at p. 28; BALLESTEROS (above no. 5), at p.207

Means: the development of resources and the allocation and application of instruments

From the previous points it derives that Grand Strategy has to be able to mobilise all the instruments at a nation's disposal, the so-called DIME (Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic)[31]. In addition, at the comprehensive level of Grand Strategy, DIME instruments must be complemented with the economic, demographic and social resources of a society[32]. The distinction between instruments and resources lays on the timeframe: while instruments are a finished product to be used immediately, it is through the longer-term development of resources that a country can overcome, at least partially, its domestic constraints and thus advance towards its goals. Therefore, Grand Strategy requires the mobilisation of a wide array of both instruments and resources (condition 5). In addition, a country has to develop its resources consistently with the NSS document (condition 6). And finally, the NSS must establish clear priorities for the development of resources and the allocation and application of instruments (condition 7). Resources and instruments at a state's disposal are limited, and having too many priorities is just as having none[33].

The national security approaches of the UK and Spain

While, as mentioned above, the British approach to national security inspired that of Spain, there are a number of important differences that started to appear already before the publication of their respective NSS documents. In Britain the question of national security was a recurring concern during the 2000s, due to the country's involvement in the US-led "war on terror". Numerous policy proposals were made between 2006 and 2010[34]. On its turn, in Spain it was not considered a priority, as the delays in the

[31] LASSWELL, Harold, "Politics: Who Gets What, When, How", MacGraw-Hill, New York, 1958, at p. 204
[32] LAYTON (above no. 7), at p. 60
[33] CLARKE, Michael, "Constraints on United Kingdom foreign and defence policy", Defence Analysis, 14(1), 1998, pp. 67-77
[34] NEVILLE-JONES, Pauline, "Security Issues: Interim position paper", National and International Security policy Group of the Conservative Party, 2006; EDWARDS, Charlie, "The Case for a National Security Strategy", Demos Report, 2007; IPPR (Institute for Public Policy Research), "Shared Responsibilities: A national security strategy for the UK", Final report of the IPPR Commission on National Security in the 21st Century, 2009

preparation of the first-ever Spanish NSS of 2011 prove[35]. After this preliminary observation, this section looks at how the UK and Spain respond to the different conditions for Grand Strategy established in the second section.

Ends: Identity and vision for the future

The 2015 NSS of the UK tried to define Britain's identity and a vision for its future, with specific sections devoted to "vision", "values" and three "national security objectives": "protect our people", "project our global influence" and "promote our prosperity"[36]. This can be considered a step forward since its 2008 version, which was criticised for failing to achieve "a clear and integrated strategy baseline"[37], and for offering "a free lunch" in which no difficult policy choices were necessary[38]. However, the progresses made since then are limited. In particular, the strategic dimension of the UK's "vision" in the 2015 document seems disputable, as it is merely described as "a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence"[39]. Does the UK have the necessary instruments, or could it develop the required resources, to achieve this vision? Patrick Porter has stated that the 2015 NSS "overstates the power that [the UK] has"[40]. In the end, an unrealistic vision is as inadequate as having none. Accordingly, the parliamentary Joint Committee on the NSS lamented that the 2015 document had failed to provide a clear picture of what the UK wanted to achieve and how would do it[41]. Arguably, despite progresses in the direction of the above-mentioned condition 1, it can be said that Porter's "free lunch" has not finished yet. On its turn, Spain's 2013 NSS fails to establish an identity for the country and a vision for its future, as it only refers to Spain as "an open, advanced

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[35] ARTEAGA, Félix, "La Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional 2013", Comentario Elcano 37/2013
[36] HM GOVERNMENT, "National Security and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom", The Stationery Office, London, 2015
[37] GEARSON, John; GOW, James. 2010. "Security, Not Defence, Strategic, Not Habit: Restructuring the Political Arrangements for Policy Making on Britain's Role in the World", The Political Quarterly, 81(3), 2010, at p. 407
[38] PORTER, Patrick, "Why Britain doesn't do Grand Strategy", The RUSI Journal, 155(4), 2010, at p. 6
[39] HM GOVERNMENT (above no. 36), at p. 9
[40] HOUSE OF COMMONS DEFENCE COMMITTEE, "Oral evidence: Strategic Defence and Security Review", HC 626, Tuesday 24 November 2015
[41] JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY, "National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015", HL Paper 18, HC 153, First Report of Session 2016-17, The House of Lords and the House of Commons, London, 2016, at p. 39

and formed society"[42]. In addition, as Ballesteros notes, the Spanish 2013 NSS did not identify the national interests[43], which resulted, as Marquina states, "in a lack of a clear definition of the political priorities that need to be developed"[44].

Furthermore, both NSS documents have some problems regarding the necessary forward-looking character (condition 2). However, these are more acute in the Spanish case, which seems to take exclusively a risk-management approach to national security. Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy described the NSS as "a Strategy that orients the State's action towards *responding* to current challenges" [emphasis added][45]. Further down, its chapters two and three are devoted to describe the risks and threats that Spain faces, from a geographical and a thematic point of view respectively, while chapter four establishes one "strategic line of action" to deal with each risk. Therefore, there seems to be a lack of a true strategic, forward-looking, vision. On its turn, Britain's 2010 NSS was equally criticised for being too focused on risk management[46]. However, its 2015 version provided important progresses. It was only "informed by" instead of "based on"[47] the 2015 National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA)[48]. The same NSS document acknowledged that a purely risk management approach was contrary to the strategic spirit, as it affirmed that "the NSRA is intended to inform strategic judgement, not forecast every risk"[49].

Ways: the Governmental machinery for Grand Strategy

[42] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, "The National Security Strategy: Sharing a Common Project", Presidencia del Gobierno, Madrid, 2013, at p. 2
[43] BALLESTEROS (above no. 5), at p. 305
[44] MARQUINA, Eduardo (ed.), "La Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional 2013. Un Pavimento Deslizante", Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 2015, at p. 12
[45] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN (above no. 42), at p. ii
[46] CROWCROFT, Robert, 2012. "A War on 'Risk'? British Government and the National Security Strategy". The Political Quarterly, 83(1), 2012, at p. 173
[47] JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (above no. 41), at p. 33
[48] The NSRA is the tool used to compare, assess and prioritise the most relevant risks to the national security of the UK. The NSRA places the domestic and external risks that the UK faces "into three tiers, according to judgement of both likelihood and impact". See HM GOVERNMENT (above no. 36), at p. 85
[49] Ibid

David Cameron announced the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC) on 12 May 2010, the second day of his Coalition government[50]. This body, of cabinet level and cross-departmental nature, was conceived to "coordinate policy decisions across the full spectrum of national security concerns"[51], including the development and implementational oversight of the NSS[52]. The high political profile of the NSC was reinforced by the commitment of the Primer Minister to personally chair the NSC on a weekly basis[53]. In addition, since 2016 the NSC has a subcommittee "established specifically to oversee and drive implementation of SDSR 2015"[54]. All this seems to points to a Grand Strategy approach under condition 3. Regarding the coordinating and implementation capacities of the British NSC (condition 4), it is often said that this body has brought real improvements for the coordination of the different governmental departments involved in national security, thanks to the "regularity of process, frequency of high-level ministerial and official attendance at meetings, and focused secretariat support"[55]. However, it is also widely acknowledged that the NSC has brought little institutional innovation[56], and its benefits have derived primarily from a "persistent prime ministerial attention"[57]. In addition, the NSC "has no specific legal basis", as the Executive created it using its prerogative powers[58]. Therefore, the impact of the UK's NSC on Grand Strategy needs to be nuanced. If the incumbent Prime Minister decides to lower national security in her list of priorities, a return to the pre-NSC age seems unavoidable.

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[50] PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, "Establishment of a National Security Council", 12 May 2010. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/establishment-of-a-national-security-council [accessed 27 March 2017]
[51] DEVANNY, Joe, "The National Security Council - its history and its future", Institute for Government, London, 2014. Available at: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/national-security-council-its-history-and-its-future [accessed 27 March 2017]
[52] HM GOVERNMENT, "A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy", The Stationery Office, London, 2010, at p. 11
[53] DEVANNY (above no. 51)
[54] HM GOVERNMENT, "National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 (First Annual Report 2016)", Cabinet Office, London, 2016, at p. 31
[55] DEVANNY, Joe; HARRIS, Josh , "*The National Security Council: National security at the centre of government*", Institute for Government, London, 2014, at p. 4
[56] CAVANAGH, Matt, "Missed Opportunity", The RUSI Journal, 156(5), 2011, at p. 12; GEARSON, John; GOW, James (above no. 37), at p. 417
[57] DEVANNY, Joe; HARRIS, Josh (above no. 51), at p. 4
[58] LUNN, Jon et al, "*The UK National Security Council: Briefing Paper Number 7456"*, House of Commons Library, London, 2016, at p. 4

Spain has relatively similar means to deal with national security matters. Its 2013 NSS includes a chapter that presents the national security system (Spain lacked one before), which places a NSC at its centre[59]. The coordinating and monitoring functions of the NSC are generally similar to those of its British counterpart[60]. The Spanish NSC is chaired by the Prime Minister and has to meet "periodically"[61]. However, while it is officially placed at the same level of its British counterpart, there are two important differences. The first one is the frequency of the meetings. The Spanish NSC is only required to meet one time every two months[62], which only amounts to one eighth of the frequency of the British NSC. While the Prime Minister can call it whenever he considers necessary, establishing a bimonthly minimum is arguably unambitious. The second difference lays on the fact that the Spanish national security system lacks a formal National Security Adviser (NSA)[63]. This seems surprising, since the possibilities offered by a dedicated NSA have been especially highlighted in the UK[64]. Devanny and Harris argue that the existence of a NSA provides a valuable opportunity for the much-needed inter-departmental co-operation in matters of national security[65]. The lack of a NSA, together with the low frequency of the NSC meetings, cast doubts on the capacity of Spain to effectively implement its NSS under condition 4.

Means: the development of resources and the allocation and application of instruments

Together with the NSS, Cameron's 2010 government published the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), the first "comprehensive overhaul" of the British defence policy and strategy since 1998[66]. While the NSS had to provide the strategic goals and lines of action, addressing primarily the ends, the SDSR was conceived to provide the

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[59] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN (above no. 42), at p. 53
[60] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN (above no. 42), at pp. 55-56
[61] Ibid, at p. 55
[62] Article 3(7). ROYAL DECREE 385/2013, May 31st, modifying Royal Decree 1886/2011, December 30th, BOE no. 131, pp. 41487-41490
[63] LABORIE, Mario, "La Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional", Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (Documento de Análisis 34/2013), at p. 5
[64] BOYS, James, "*Intelligence Design: UK National Security in a Changing World*", The Bow Group, London, 2012
[65] DEVANNY, Joe; HARRIS, Josh (above no. 51), at p. 5
[66] CAVANAGH (above no. 56), at p. 7

means[67]. Contrary to its 12-year old predecessor (named "Strategic Defence Review"), the 2010 SDSR was not only prepared by the Ministry of Defence. The SDSR contemplated non-military areas and instruments, such as cyber security, development aid and anti-terrorism. While its military content was widely criticised for having been reduced to a list of defence cuts[68], its consistence with a Grand Strategy, comprehensive, approach under condition 5 cannot be obviated. In the 2015 edition, the British government took a step further and merged the NSS and SDSR, which suggests a better integration between the strategic ends and strategic means[69].

In addition, the UK has directed considerable attention towards the development of its resources. For instance, in 2016, a new *National Cyber Security Strategy* was presented, together with the Government's decision to allocate £1.9 billion for its implementation (almost doubling the funding of its 2011 predecessor)[70]. In addition, the SDSR part of the 2015 NSS makes specific commitments to develop resources of military nature, such as doubling the investment in the equipment of the Special Forces[71]. In the domain of development aid, the NSS refocused its aid budget to support "fragile and broken states and regions to prevent conflict"[72], allocating for that purpose "at least 50%" of the aid budget[73]. These are only a few examples that seem to point that the UK is committed to the development of its resources in order to achieve the objectives of its NSS, thus fulfilling condition 6.

Finally, the development of the UK's resources has followed, at least partially, the necessary logic of prioritisation accordingly with condition 7. For instance, the resources devoted to cyber security, which was assessed as a top (tier one NSRA risk) strategic priority in 2010 and 2015 have incremented dramatically, as seen above. Similarly, the refocus of the British development aid towards the stabilisation of fragile states is also explicitly connected with another top priority established in the 2015 NSS: the fight against

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[67] PORTER (above no. 38), at p. 12
[68] CAVANAGH (above no. 56)
[69] LUNN, Jon; SCARNELL, Eleanor, "The 2015 UK National Security Strategy: Briefing Paper Number 7431", House of Commons Library, London, 2015, at p. 4
[70] HM GOVERNMENT, "Britain's cyber security bolstered by world-class strategy", 1 November 2016. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/britains-cyber-security-bolstered-by-world-class-strategy [Accessed 29 March 2017]
[71] HM GOVERNMENT (above no. 36), at p. 6
[72] Ibid
[73] Ibid, at p. 48

terrorism[74]. This prioritisation has been facilitated by the NSRA (see note no. 48) and its division of risks into three different categories depending on priority.

The 2013 NSS of Spain proves that this country is equally aware of the need to deploy a wide array of instruments and resources in order to advance its NSS goals[75]. As the UK, Spain has also approved a number of sectorial or second-level strategies, such as the National Maritime Security Strategy[76] and the Cyber Security National Strategy[77]. However, neither of them includes a budget for its implementation. In fact, it is within the domain of means where the main difference between the UK and Spain seems to exist. Instead of merging the ends and means in a single document like the British 2015 NSS/SDSR, Spain preferred to establish the capacities needed for the implementation of its NSS in second-level strategies[78]. This approach could undermine the strategic value of the overall NSS, as makes the unity of action that the same NSS embraces[79] more difficult to achieve.

However, this is not the main problem in the Spanish approach to strategic means. Spain's 2013 NSS defines twelve "priority areas of action" on the basis of the twelve "risks and threats to national security" previously identified. However, they are not hierarchically ordered. Having to deal simultaneously with twelve areas of action seems beyond the capacities of any country. According to a British Member of Parliament with wide experience in the oversight of national security, "a reasonable number of strategic priorities to deal with is five to seven"[80]. In addition, in general terms the content of the twelve lines of action is either descriptive or very vague. An example of this can be found in the area of action number eleven, Maritime Security[81]. On its turn, the National Maritime Security Strategy, which should provide, as a second-level strategy, "the ways and means", essentially repeats the lines of action contained in the NSS document, and

[74] Ibid, at p. 64
[75] LABORIE (above no. 63), at p. 5
[76] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, "National Maritime Security Strategy", Presidencia del Gobierno, Madrid, 2013
[77] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, "National Cyber Security Strategy", Presidencia del Gobierno, Madrid, 2013
[78] BALLESTEROS (above no. 5), at pp. 240 et 305
[79] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN (above no. 42), at p. 9
[80] The identity of the author cannot be revealed because he was speaking under the Chatham House Rule, during the course National Security Studies (7SSWM078), King's College London
[81] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN (above no. 42), at p. 50

equally fails to allocate instruments and responsibilities[82]. Overall, the lack of prioritisation and clear allocation of resources and instruments results in implementational difficulties. The 2016 Annual National Security Report of Spain, which has to oversee the deployment of the NSS, lacks cohesion[83]. The principle of unity of action, on which the NSS placed special emphasis, is largely absent.

Conclusions

If strategy "suggests an ability to look up from the short term and the trivial to view the long term and the essential"[84], Grand Strategy goes even further. The first section has defined Grand Strategy as a particular type of strategy that is large in three different dimensions: the actor that pursues it (the state), the goals it aims to achieve (the highest policy goals, and essentially the safeguard of national security) and the timeframe it requires (the long term). It has also been argued that, while all states do, at least implicitly, some Grand Strategy accordingly with this definition, having an explicit "Grand Strategy approach" is useful because it facilitates the achievement of the national security ends.

The second section has identified seven different conditions for the assessment of whether a country "does" Grand Strategy, based on the three key elements of any strategy: ends, ways and means. These conditions have been applied in the third section in order to answer the initial question, namely whether it is true that Britain does not do Grand Strategy. By comparing the practice of national security of the UK with that of Spain, it seems possible to answer negatively: Britain does do Grand Strategy. The UK fulfils considerably well five of the seven conditions for doing Grand Strategy. In particular, it has embraced a forward-looking approach to national security (which refers to ends), it has created some important national security structures (ways), and has strategically mobilised a wide array of resources and instruments (means). However, the Grand Strategy approach of the UK is far from perfect. In particular, it has two important flaws. The first one is a persistent mismatch between the vague and too ambitious ends and the prescribed means (condition 1). If, as Richard Betts stated, "strategy fails when the

[82] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN (above no. 76), at p. 40
[83] GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, "Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2016", Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Madrid, 2017
[84] FREEDMAN (above no. 6), at p. ix

chosen means prove insufficient to the ends"[85], the British Government needs to reduce and specify its strategic ambitions. And second, the UK lacks a deeply institutionalised national security system, as it still depends too much on the will of the Prime Minister (condition 4).

On its turn, while Spain has developed some useful ways for the practice of Grand Strategy, it has so far failed to present a strategic vision to direct them. In addition, it has not aligned the necessary means to pursue the stated ends (the twelve "priority areas of action" that the 2013 NSS document established). However, it must also be considered that Spain has started to develop its national security system much latter than Britain. The publication of the new Spanish NSS, scheduled for 2017, will be a critical moment to assess whether Spain is progressing, as the UK has already done, towards the practice of Grand Strategy.

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[85] BETTS (above no. 2), at p. 50