

Conceptualisation of War: Clausewitzian and Anti-Clausewitzian Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

War is a source of great concern to society. Its destructive potential is much, and it is unlikely to be eliminated. War is destructive, but it is a means to achieve lasting peace. Thus, it is part of societal evolution. To this end, Karl Von Clausewitz wrote on the philosophy of war. Therefore, this study systematically explored the concept of war, Clausewitz paradigm of war, the contemporary Clausewitz warfare and the anti-Clausewitz perspective of war. The study was based on the qualitative method. The major sources of data collection were books, lecture notes, journals and internet materials. Data analysis was done through content analysis. The study concluded that Clausewitz's approach to war is dialectical. On war, he used polarities to rationalise a subject of great depth and breadth. Clausewitz consistently presents an observation with its opposite. The theory was set against practice; moral forces are compared with physical force. Clausewitz can be separated from other military scholars by the 'wholeness' of his approach and the reality he brings to the discussion of war. There was an attack, and there was a defense. Clausewitz constructed a beautiful pendulum in explaining the phenomenon and philosophy of War.

KEYWORDS: War, Absolute War, Limited War, Politics, Friction

INTRODUCTION

On War is one of those great texts, such as religious scriptures or classical political theories, from which soldiers, statesmen and scholars derive inspiration and prestige from what they are trying to achieve. It is the standard text that is meant to relate their proposed strategies to some tenet of Clausewitz's thought in all war colleges and officers. On War, consists of eight books numbering more than seven hundred pages. It is a standard source for those interested in the phenomenon of war and armed conflict. The work is based on rigorous analysis of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century wars, all being wars between nation-states. With the rise of intrastate conflicts, civil wars and, in particular, terrorism in the last two decades, some thinkers consider On War as a relic from the past. Is On War still relevant in the world of today's conflict?

War is a source of great concern to society. Its destructive potential is much, and it is unlikely to be eliminated (Gahia, 2018, p.183). Palmer and Perkins cited in Gahia (2018) suggested that war, and not peace, is the normal condition of human existence. They base themselves in part on the elaborate documentation of the types and frequency of war observes in history. Hegel, as cited in Kristof (2015) writes that:

War should not be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external contingency whose cause is

therefore itself contingent, whether this cause lies in the passions of rulers or nations, in injustices, or in anything else that is not as it should be. War—war being just as the movement of the winds [which] preserves the sea from the stagnation which a lasting calm could produce (Hegel, as cited in Kristof, 2015, p.34).

Clausewitz added that warfare is statecraft or economics by other means. War belongs to conflict phenomena. Hostilities, aggression and violence are part and parcel of war. It adds to its mass killing and destruction from other armed conflicts. War stands at the source and functions as the foundation and means of the continuation fragment of the society. "War is a father of all and a king of all. It renders some gods, others men; it makes some slaves, others free." (Heraclitus, as cited in Kristof, 2015, p.36). War is a basic source of societal organisation. Clausewitz was primarily concerned with the significant military conflicts between states that were typical of European wars in the 19th and 20th centuries (Kaldor, 2010). So, in this 21st century, is Clausewitz still relevant? Or does our normal deference to Clausewitz cloud our ability to deal with contemporary disputes globally? Can Clausewitz's idea be extended at a time when absolutist definitions of the nation-state give way to complicated multilateral systems and when new ways of war involving non-state actors replace war between nation-states? It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the Clausewitzian

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perspectives of war, contemporary Clausewitzian and anti-Clausewitzian perspectives of war.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the Clausewitzian perspectives of war
2. To examine the anti-Clausewitzian perspectives of war
3. To examine the contemporary Clausewitzian perspectives of war

Research Methodology

This is basically a library and descriptive research. Therefore, the study relies solely on secondary sources for the generation of data. The methods or instruments employed in collecting data and information for the study is mainly secondary source which include, published materials, government records, annual report or agencies, daily newspapers, textbooks, libraries, dairies, seminar papers, internet research and official publications of government. All the data generated were intensively cross checked and thoroughly subjected to content analysis. According to Okafor (2017, p. 114), raw data have no meaning until they are analyzed. In other words, it is analysis that impact meaning to data. In view of this, the data in this work was analyzed in line with the objectives of the study.

Literature Review

The reviewed of related literature is based on the documentation of Von Clausewitz theory of war. The first section focused on Von Clausewitz's biography, his conception of war, anti-Clausewitzian perspectives and contemporary perspectives of war.

Conceptualising War

The concept of war has various interpretations, just like some concepts in social sciences. Despite these variances, it has a unique attribute, which is a species in the genus of violence; more specifically, it is collective, direct, manifest, personal, intentional, organized, institutionalized, instrumental, sanctioned, and sometimes ritualized and regulated, violence (Johan, 2018). In principle, according to international law, conflict may only take place within independent political entities, states

Johan (2018) defines war as a social and political phenomenon. It is a way of addressing conflicts within the highest order political entity units. Many of those who have been dealing with war as a socio-political problem have often taken as their essential assumption that there is a profound distinction between domestic disputes and regional conflicts that arise in the state of chaos. Wars have been seen as specifically affecting state agencies, such as the foreign offices and the armed forces. Because war is placed in an international sense, states' existence and death could be at the stake of war (Aron, 1966).

There is a general understanding of conflict as inter-state phenomena has been held by many students, regardless of their professional experience as political theorists, historians, sociologists, psychologists or military observers. The School of Political Realism maintains that nation-states can only realise their national interests by showing their ability to combat and use wars at different degrees of magnitude as a national policy tool to accomplish valid ends (Lider, 1977). Sorel (1912) defined war as a "political act by means of which states, unable to adjust a dispute regarding

their obligations, rights or interests, resort to armed force to decide which is the stronger and may therefore impose its will on the other".

Kallen (1939) appears to prefer a political concept of war as he writes "war may be described as an armed struggle between two or more sovereign entities using coordinated military forces in pursuit of particular goals." He adds that this organisation of the contending armed forces stretches back behind the battle lines. Kallen (1939) in Johan (2018) criticises von Clausewitz' concept of war as "an act of aggression in order to cause the adversary to do what we wish" as being overly general and indefinite. He says that "this term can also refer to most of what is called harmony, especially in sport, business and finance. It could relate to someone's act of aggression if it arises. As confined to war, this refers to pre-Napoleonic and pre-industrial periods and intentions, when war was seen as a business, and a gentleman's game". There are several drawbacks to this concept. It acknowledges conflict within a nation such as civil war, militant war, racial war, and religious war.

Johnson (1935) quoted in Johan (2018) describes war as a "violent struggle between demographic groups conceived as organic units, such as races or tribes, states or lesser territorial unit; religious or political parties, economic classes." According to Bernard (1944), this concept can be regarded as roughly sociological because it does not restrict violent conflict to political units but encompasses any form of population entity capable of resorting to arms as a means of resolving disputes. The concept might be too vague because it does not define the length of the dispute or the extent of the opposing parties. As it stands, this description may involve protests. Russell's (1916), quoted in Johan (2018), described war as a "conflict between two parties, one of which tries to destroy and maim as many of the other groups as necessary in order to obtain what it wishes" is much more common and uncritically inclusive. Russell points forth the purpose over which men are battling as "generally strength or money." Wallace (1968) considers war to be the "the act of using deadly weapons by citizens of one community against members of another" (cited in Johan, 2018). It is carried out by qualified people employed in teams headed by a different policy-making group and assisted in numerous forms by non-combatants."

Deutsch and Senghaas (1971) cited in Johan (2018) defined war as an operation involving large-scale orchestrated action, planned and sustained by the compulsion and authority of the state and its government and aimed toward another state or quasi-state, i.e. a reasonably comparable political entity." Barringer (1972) finds war to be a "possible form of political action intended to address an unresolved conflict of interest successfully and favourably. In this way, war is just one of the procedures for dispute, some being peace, conciliation, consultation, arbitration and adjudication. It is merely a basic subset of a broader collection of all types of war, encompassing all socially (if not legally) recognised circumstances in which armed conflicts of substantial magnitude are undertaken on a systemic basis by armed forces of two or more political groups, organisations, countries, governments or states. Bernard (1944) described war as:

A constant confrontation against or between collectivities of some sort capable of arming and

organising themselves for a brutal fight fought by military forces on the land (or naval units on the water) and assisted by civilian or incompletely militarised communities on the back of the combat zones constituted for the pursuit of certain reasonably well-defended ones (p.34).

Gahia (2008, p.186) sees war as “always form of political struggle”. A political struggle is a contest for power. This preposition is conformity with the view of Clausewitz (which is the crux of this study) that war is an act of violence intended to compel our opponents to fulfil WILL as a part of the continuation of political intercourse. “War is organised combat between armed groups in a struggle for power” (Gahia, 2008, p.186). The above definition sees war as a means of achieving political objectives. This seems to correlate with the view of Clausewitz in his book *On War*. The next heading will explore the biography of Carl Von Clausewitz, a renounce scholar in military and strategic studies.

Who is Clausewitz?

To provide context, it is necessary to explore Von Clausewitz's biography and the reality of warfare during his time. Carl Von Clausewitz was born on June 1, 1780, in Burg, which was close to Magdeburg (Prussia). Clausewitz's father was a lieutenant in the Prussian army of Frederick the Great. Like his father, Clausewitz became a military man. When Clausewitz was thirteen, he received his “baptism by fire” during the campaign against the French armies. In addition to being a soldier, Clausewitz was also very interested in educating himself in many different subject areas. Clausewitz was accepted into the military school in Berlin: an accomplishment for the times. Clausewitz dedicated his life to thinking, practising and fighting war.

From his start at the War Academy, Clausewitz rose through the Prussian ranks, eventually becoming Chief of Staff. Clausewitz grew up and participated in a period of significant change in European warfare. The war against the French in 1793 was the war of the First Coalition, which sought the destruction of the revolutionary regime in France. Howard (2013) comments on this period of Clausewitz's life: “during the following decade, in a Brandenburg garrison and then as a student at the Berlin War Academy, he observed the new dynamism of the French nation and of her military tool as it developed, became institutionalised, and extended its power across Europe.” Clausewitz lived through a significant change in warfare, which was reflected in his thinking and writing. This development shaped and ordered his war's philosophy. The elites in Prussia and the elites in other European countries, were concerned with the ideals of the French revolution. At its core, the French revolution emphasised the overthrow of Europe's social order and the people's role and their relationship with the government. The French Revolution represented a shift in the

understanding of the role of the people in society. In this post-revolutionary world, the social contract of the ancient régime, emphasised by the monarch's sovereignty as the emissary of God, was now replaced by the people's sovereignty. In military terms, Napoleon represented a revolution in military affairs (RMA) produced by the levee enemas (conscription), and the decisive battle (massive climactic battles that ended conflict).

Against this backdrop of changes in warfare, Clausewitz began to develop his unique theory of warfare. Clausewitz can be separated from other military scholars by the ‘wholeness’ of his approach and the reality he brings to the discussion of war. “Clausewitz insisted that any meaningful theory should be able to accommodate all elements pertaining to its subject.” This is in stark contrast to other military scholars of the time, such as Bulow and Jomini, who focused exclusively on formulas and fixed rules for warfare (Dimitriu, 2018). For example, Jomini believed that certain scientific principles governed the conduct of war. Chief among these were the lines of operations and the focus on the decisive point. According to Jomini these principles were unchanging and reflected the proper form of war. In 1818, Clausewitz was given the directorship of the War College in Berlin and promoted to the rank of Major-General. For the next twelve years, Clausewitz dedicated himself to what would eventually become *On War*. In 1830, Clausewitz was recalled into service as an artillery commander. Later that year, when the spectre of a new European war appeared on the horizon, Clausewitz was appointed Chief of Staff of the Prussian army. During the Polish rebellion suppression, Clausewitz's army attempted to create a quarantine to suppress the cholera epidemic.

Unfortunately, Clausewitz contracted and later died of cholera. Clausewitz never fully finished his work, and it was left to his wife to organise his papers and publish the book. When Clausewitz began *On War*, he expressed his desire to write a book that would deal with the major elements of strategy. This indicates a very narrow focus, but for Clausewitz, strategy entails the entirety that is war, including political, organisational, and tactical concerns. In a note written in 1818, Clausewitz reveals a desire to “write a book that would not be forgotten after two or three years,’ and so he set about to theorise war, provide strategy and tactical advice and argue the consequences of war. Simpson posits and defends a simple dichotomy in war types. Hoffman (2013) defines conventional war and the “Clausewitzian paradigm” as wars fought to “establish military conditions for a political solution.” The author contends that in such wars, the military operates as a “domain” and indirectly creates the necessary conditions for political results. This is contrasted with conflicts in which military forces are employed to “directly seek political, as opposed to military outcomes.”

On War is divided into eight books; the books and a short description provided are found in Table1

Book One: "On the Nature of War"	Describes war and its nature, including: what war is, moral forces in war, uncertainty in war and friction from the point of view of the soldier. It is in this The book that Clausewitz first discusses the "reasons for war."
Book Two: "On the Theory of War"	Discusses Clausewitz's theory of war , including an analysis of war as neither a science nor an art. He provides historical examples of war and outlines his analytical approach.
Book Three: "On Strategy in General"	An in depth analysis of strategy including discussion of: force, concentration of forces, time, space and the impact of moral factors on strategy. His years as a military leader helped to inform this chapter.
Book Four: "The Engagement"	Examines the main aspect of war, fighting, focusing on strategy and tactics.
Book Five: "Military Forces"	Discusses the troops and underlines the specialness of war and the character of man needed.
Book Six: "Defense"	Describes and analyses the relationship between attack and defence with a focus upon defence in war. Book Seven: "The Attack" Similar to Book Six except
Book Seven: "The Attack"	Similar to Book Six except with a focus upon the attack or offensive in battle.
Book Eight: "War Plans"	Examines absolute and real war as well the character of total war, limited war, offensive war and defensive war. It represents the conclusion of the book and is both a summary and a cautionary tale for future politicians and soldiers. This book, along with books five and six, discuss the "conduct of war"

Source: Shephard, (2007).

On War is not the usual strategy and tactics' handbook of the time. Clausewitz wanted his readers to understand the nature of war and all its horrors, the specialness of the troops needed, the leadership required of Generals and, most importantly, the connection between the political decision to engage in war, the conduct of war and the consequences. There are many interesting ideas in *On War*. However, specifically relevant to this article is the "on war" variables (that is, the political objectives of war - either submission, overthrow, or concessions) and the conduct of war variables (offensive/defensive war and limited/unlimited war). These variables are the key variables for comparison with modern wars because they represent the logic of decisions to go to war and the objectives to be achieved, which Clausewitz explained represented the true nature of warfare.

Clausewitz Perspective of War

War involves a lot of actions and weapons between or among warring countries. Clausewitz is famous primarily as a military theorist who examined war dialectics based on his participation in the Napoleonic war. His principle book is ON WAR, which is a significant work on the philosophy of war. He tried to reach a fuller understanding of the nature of war by exploring his subject dialectically, an approach popular among 19th century German philosophers.' First, he assumes that the object of war is political-to impose one's Will on the enemy. He then logically constructs a thesis regarding "absolute" war-that is, war as a pure act of physical force abstracted from other variables (such as international law or scarce resources) that might limit it but are theoretically external to the concept of war itself. In this abstract sense, the aim of warfare is purely military-to disarm the enemy, rendering him powerless to resist the victor's will. Clausewitz deduces the "pure," unencumbered interaction of military forces, leading inevitably through escalation to extremes of Will and effort. Into this "logical fantasy,"

however, steps reality.' War neither breaks out nor proceeds in isolation from external variables. For example, necessary resources (forces, material, etc.) may be unavailable or take excessive time to mobilise or develop. Allies may not cooperate. Physical barriers (vast distances, mountains, seas, etc.) may impede efforts to concentrate military power in space and time. "Culminating points" may be reached and action suspended.' Information and intelligence may be deficient or misused. Resolve and morale may be weak. Leaders may be daring, indecisive, or foolhardy. Chance interferes. "Friction" complicates planning and retards action.' Treaties, international law, or custom may circumscribe options. All of these and other variables act to limit the conduct of warfare, which creates an antithesis to the theoretical gravitation of war toward absolute violence.

Thus, according to Clausewitz, War has a dual nature and is pulled by opposing escalation and limitation tendencies. Given this duality, the degree of effort that should be made in war becomes a matter of judgment that requires a constant assessment of the probabilities of success in the light of known circumstances. Since success or failure can be measured only with respect to the political object-the original motive for the war-political policy must be the state's supreme consideration in judging what military objective to pursue and what level of effort to mount for its achievement. This leads logically to Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is "a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means" (Shephard, 2007, p.86).

With the addition of this third dimension-the subordination of war to policy-to his earlier construct of a duality of war, Clausewitz refines his concept by concluding that "as a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a remarkable trinity" (Shephard, 2007, p.86). The first

tendency of war-its intrinsic tendency-is toward unlimited violence and enmity. The second is the play of chance that real individuals and circumstances interject (the uncertainty so generated must be managed by the commander and his army in the planning and conduct of battle). The third is the subjection of war to rational direction by the political leadership of the governments engaged. Each war finds some point of balance among these variable tendencies, "like an object suspended between three magnets" (Shephard, 2007, p.86).

To Clausewitz, war is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale. War is the realm of uncertainty. If we would conceive as a unit the countless number of duels which make up a war, we shall do so best by supposing to ourselves two wrestlers. Each strives by physical force to compel the other to submit to his Will; his first object is to throw his adversary, and thus to render him incapable of further resistance. It is also an act of force to compel our enemy to do our WILL. War is different from other activities because it employs violence and bloodshed (Bhandwaj, 2017).

Political Objective: The reason to go to war always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. Politics thus determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires. War is nothing but the continuation of policy by other means. Clausewitz explains that war is fought for three reasons:

Concessions: When a state seeks concessions, they seek to obtain limited objectives from another state by strengthening their bargaining position in relation to their enemy.

Submission: When a state seeks submission, they impose their Will upon their enemy, thereby forcing them to accept their terms.

Overthrow: This is related to submission in that when one state is replacing the ruling regime, they are forcing them into submission. The difference is that submission can be related to minor objectives as well as those of conquest and overthrow. Overthrow is unique in that one state is destroying the sovereignty of the other state.

Offensive War: According to Clausewitz, the main feature of an offensive battle is the out-flanking or bypassing of the defender—that is, taking the initiative. In modern terms, it means to strike first. Defensive wars are a reaction to an attack. The object of offensive attack is the enemy's subjugation and the destruction on their Will to resist.

Defensive War: This type of war is about preservation. It is a negative form (negative suggests you do nothing) of action aimed at destroying enough of the enemy's power to force them to renounce their intentions. Every single act of resistance is directed to that act alone, and that is what makes our policy negative

Clausewitzian Typologies of War

Clausewitz divided the War into two: Absolute War and Real War

Absolute War

Absolute War demands an instantaneous and maximum discharge of violence to overpower the enemy completely. He also says that there is no logical limit to the application of force in this act of violence. This is term as "absolute war". Violence, he says, is the means. The ultimate object is the 'compulsory submission of the enemy to our will' and, in order to achieve this, the enemy must be disarmed. He then goes on to explain why this must lead to the extreme use of violence.

The overthrow of the enemy is the natural end of the act of war, and that if we would keep *within the strictly philosophical limits of the idea*, there can be no other in reality. As this idea must apply to both belligerent parties, it must follow that there can be no suspension in the military act, and peace cannot take place until one or other of the parties concerned is overthrown (Kaldor, 2010, p.4).

Clausewitz's notion of absolute war, I would argue, explains why he is so preoccupied with the suspension of the act of war and with a defensive war. Indeed, a whole section of Book I, Chapter I is devoted to the problem of suspending War. The logic of absolute war suggests that war should be concentrated in a single blow – a point that Clausewitz, (1997) makes repeatedly:

A suspension of the act of warfare, strictly speaking, is in contradiction with the nature of the thing: because two armies, being incompatible elements, should destroy one another unremittingly, just as fire and water can never put themselves in equilibrium, but act and react upon one another, until one quite disappears. What would be said of two wrestlers who remained clasped round each other for hours without making a movement? (Kaldor, 2010, p.4).

Yet, he acknowledges, most wars involve waiting around; 'standing still' is the norm. Much of his explanation has to do with the timidity and imperfection of human perception. He describes 18th-century wars as 'shrivelled-up' half-and-half affairs; this is partly explained by the failure to mobilise national power, which only became possible after the French Revolution.

Absolute war means total obliteration of the enemy. Violence does not stop anywhere. Force is instantaneously applied until the enemy is decimated. But is such a war possible? If such a war is not possible why it is not possible? What are those things that constraints war from becoming absolute war? From becoming total annihilating? This what he described as an absolute war. If the war is unchecked, it will go on and on and destroy the entire enemy, which is not the aim of war. Total destroy is not the aim of war. Total destruction through a nuclear bomb is not the aim of war. Thus, absolute war is also known as war in theory or absolute war. Absolute war is waged with all available forces and resources without interruption until one side can impose its will on the other. Absolute war can become uncontrollable because of the situational dilemma. The dilemma is that, if I refrain from using extreme methods in war, my enemy may gain advantages by using extreme methods. This compels me to use maximum force, and this is what leads to absolute war. Since war aim is to disarm the enemy, the opponent continues to fight until a total

subjugation of the opponent is achieved. The complete defeat of the enemy characterises this type of war through the destruction of their centre of gravity (the hub of all power) and their will to resist. As war is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our *Will*, absolute war demands your enemy's complete submission, whereby you impose your will on them. It often involves the annexation of territory, forced "colonisation" of people and surrender of sovereign control of state decision making

Absolute War is Irrational

Absolute war is guided by its inherent dynamics and momentum. It tends to move up the escalation ladders and use all available means to defeat the enemy. Its extreme and instantaneous nature does not permit the political process to come in between. Therefore, it is irrational and apolitical. Such an absolute war can only happen in theory or on paper. For instance, this kind of war is the detonation of the atomic bomb in Japan. The absolute war was prevented during the Cold War era because of the level of sanity. This is called nuclear doctrine (Mutual Assured Destruction, MAD). This kind of war entails total destruction. But the total aim is to impose your WILL on your enemy. So if your enemy is annihilated, who will you impose your *Will* on? That is the logic behind the absolute war. It did not also allow any constraint such as politics to come in. This propels scholars to ask these yelling questions; is absolute war possible. If no, then, why this kind of war does not happen in reality?

Why absolute war does not occur in reality?

Clausewitz gives the following explanation to the above questions:

1. War is never an isolated act; It is not self-contained. It does not occur in a political vacuum and enemies are completely unfamiliar with each other.
2. War is never confined to a single decisive act. So a state does not have to use all its forces. Thus, sufficient forces are deployed for the immediate operational requirement.
3. All available forces could never realistically be concentrated in one place at one time.
4. No victory is final and the vanquished will generally see the situation as a temporary setback and seek restitution through political process. War happen when negotiation and diplomacy failed. The two enemies are familiar with each other. War does not involves the use absolute force.

The aim of war is limited especially in the choice of weapons used. Absolute war required absolute forces in one place in the war. War has limited aim to be achieved with limited forces.

Limited War

Since absolute war is not possible in the environment which we are living, therefore, there is a real war; a war which happen in the environment which impose a lot of constraints on the entire conduct of war. He also said the aim of war is to impose your WILL on your enemy. Example, is Iraqi war. The US told Saddam Hussein to dismantle his nuclear arsenal. But Saddam Hussein did not agree. Then, the US launched it weapons and force him to accept their WILL. They invaded the country, and Saddam Hussein went to hiding in his palace. So, primarily, every war purpose is to impose your WILL on the enemy to make him do what we want him to do

(Bhandwaj, 2017). The aim of war is to impose your WILL on the enemy.

Somewhere in Clausewitz logic implies the existence and logic of limited war. In this context, limited war is war combine with politics is no longer maximum discharges of violence, "an act of violence pushed to its utmost bounds". It is an event that can range from the overwhelming use of force to minor engagements". from wars of extermination down to simple armed observations. War happens in a limited context. War is an act of policy. Political calculation introduced rational calculation. War must be done base on the cost-benefit analysis

Effects of Politics on the War

Politics constrains the absoluteness of war. The transition from absolute to real war is achieved by introducing the political objectives of war. To Clausewitz, limited war is not an instantaneous discharge of violence because it is confined to time and space, the opportunity for political exigencies to prevail. This window of opportunity actually provides space for politics to play its part and guide it. Politics stops the animalistic instinct to destroy the entire earth. The real war is rational and logical (Bhandwaj, 2017).

The Real War Objectives is not Irrational and Apolitical

1. In a real war, the military objective is determined by politics.
2. Political authorities determined the level of reciprocity or response from the opponent.
3. Political authority determined and the amount of resources it requires. Against this backdrop, David Easton defined politics as an authoritative allocation of values (resources). Both parties are rational actors in the battles. Thus, they prevent total annihilation. India and Pakistan fought four war wars under real war.

War is an Act of Policy

The policy sets both the context for the war and shapes how it is fought. Political calculations introduced the rational calculations of end and means, cost and benefits analysis and determined the investment that a protagonist is prepared to invest to achieve its political ends, to enhance national interest. Politics regulate the animalistic instinct in human being. It is essential to constraints war from going to absolute. War is the continuation of politics by other means. This is one significant contribution Clausewitz made in politics and military strategies.

War is Continuation of Politics by Other Means

The political objective is the goal; war is the means of reaching it. War is subordinate to politics, but it is an integrated part of the policy of "a continuation of political intercourse on with other means. Although political elements restrict war, Clausewitz states that sometimes more compelling and inspiring political motives or the higher the potential stakes, the more violent the conflict can be. War is subordinate to politics. Politics moderate the escalation of war. Politics determine the purpose of war. War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means" (Clausewitz, 2007, p.28). Is war not just another expression of their thoughts, another form of speech or writing?

Friction, Constraints that make Absolute War Limited

Its political objectives determine the context and nature of the conflict. Clausewitz introduces inherent constrain in the discharges of absolute war, thus, making limited war in reality more likely. He groups these elements under the heading of "friction". Countless minor incidents- this kind you can never really foresee- combine to lower the general performance level. So that one always falls short of the intended goal. Friction means those obstacles that hinder the conduct of war, for instance, communication network, weather, health of the field commander and so on (Bhandwaj, 2017).

Friction or Chance

Friction is described as the friction of human frailty; physical exertion; the effects of tiredness or exhaustion on the body and its ability to think; danger, which makes explicit acts of judgment more difficult; uncertainty

Poor communication or physical phenomenon such as weather may constrain the pace of military operation. Finally, Clausewitz emphasises the element of chance in making war the gamble it can be and its frequent reliance on the luck and guesswork; as he posits no other human activity is so continuously bound up with chance" The net effects is to render what looks achievable and good in theory, practically difficult. Chance makes war a gamble.

Suspension of Military Action

However, extreme and absolute the conflict's political objectives, unless 'an enterprising martial spirit is in command, inactivity will be the rule and progress the exception. War cannot be fought continuously. There is a break in the conduct of war because:

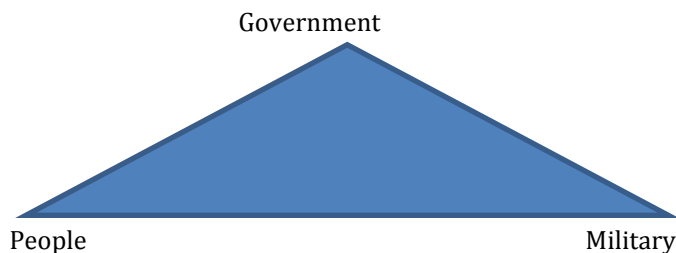
- A. Both sides have an incentive to take offensives action simultaneously
- B. Both sides being constrained by a desire to wait for a better moment before action
- C. Poor intelligence, imperfect knowledge of the situation

The Trinitarian Analysis of War

Having specified the cogent determinant that established why absolute war does not occur in reality. Clausewitz builds on the argument by introducing the conceptual framework that underpinned how real war actual fought. In proposing the trinity structure of the study of war, he established the most critical elements that in a partially infinite series of the element of permutation reflect each war's unique character. In arguing that war is more than a chameleon that merely changes colour to match the surroundings but otherwise remains identical. Clausewitz says that way is a phenomenon that, depending on the conditions, can actually take on radically different forms. The basic sources of change in those categories of forces; Irrational force (emotion, that is, primordial violence, hatred and enmity); Non-rational forces (forces not the product of human thought or intent, such as "friction, and the play of chance probability"), the rational Force (war's subordinate to reason" as an instrument of policy) (Bhandwaj, 2017).

The trinity is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristic to the given case. As a total phenomenon, its dominant tendencies always make war a remarkably trinity- composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity- which are to be regarded as a blind natural forces; of the play of chance and probability within which the

creative spirit is free to roam; and of its elements of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. Absolute war has three things (Trinity of War) Violence, hatred, and enmity. Each nation's behavior and its capacity to wages war depends on three groups of factors: the People, Military and the Government.



Source: Bhandwaj (2017).

The military, whose effectiveness is a friction of the quality of other commanders and the factors of probability and chance. The government states the political objectives and subjects the process to reason. The interaction of these three components: Passion, Chance and Reason determines the way a country or actor prosecute a particular war at a particular time and in a particular context

Moderating the War

In reality, friction, chance, difficulty concentrating maximum force at a decisive point, the impacts of moral forces, poor intelligence, and inactivity modify the execution of the war and result in an imperfect variant of the absolute model. These factors inherent moderate the instantaneous nature of absolute war, permitting time for political expedients to intervene and for a rational calculus to be applied; in doing so real or limited, war becomes a political process.

Reason: Clausewitz tells us that the conduct of war (strategy, and so on) should be a continuation of rational calculation and policy and that war inevitably originates and exists within the chaotic, unpredictable realm of politics. It is intertwined with politics. He likening war to a pendulum; thus, war swing between passion, chance and reasons.

Contemporary Clausewitzian Perspectives of War

Now that the variables have been applied to the wars mentioned by Clausewitz in *On War*, it is necessary to categorise the modern era's wars according to the same criteria. It will then be possible to draw a conclusion about the importance of *On War* in the modern era of warfare. While the variables for analysing modern conflict stay the same(that is, the reasons for war remain concession, submission or overthrow and the conduct of war variables are offensive/defensive and limited/total war) there are contemporary differences that should be made clear so as not to cause confusion during the comparison of contemporary warfare and the wars of Clausewitz. In Clausewitz's time there was no international system that dealt with the 'legality' of warfare. Since the time of Clausewitz, the rules of warfare have been codified. The international community has recognised that wars of aggression are no longer acceptable in the international arena. After World War II, the international community founded the United Nations. The preamble of the U.N. Charter says:

We the peoples of the united nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples (Fergusson, 2013, p.76).

and defensive wars in the contemporary era. The conduct of modern wars is classified as either offensive or defensive according to the criteria set forth in *On War* and by current international law. For example, any state that threatens international peace and security, breaches the peace, or engages in armed aggression is conducting an offensive war (Fergusson, 2013, p.76). On the other hand, any state that is authorised by the Security Council, or is repelling an act of aggression is conducting a defensive war. These distinctions will become clearer in the table below. The other variables are unaffected by contemporary distinction. The political reasons for war have always varied, but have been coherently reflected by concessions, submission, and overthrow categories. Similarly, whether a war is total or limited remains a reflection of the political objectives and is, accordingly, unchanged from generation to generation. For example, the ferocity of total warfare may indeed increase over time due to the technological and societal changes that have occurred over time (for example, RMA). Total war is now so destructive because it involves the use of nuclear weapons. However, even with these changes, the character of war remains the same.

The U.N. Charter placed limits on the use of force, clearly stating that war was now illegal except in three circumstances:

1. Threats to international peace and security,
2. Breaches of peace and
3. Self-defence against aggression.

In the case of the first two circumstances, action against belligerents would require authorisation from the Security Council (Fergusson, 2013,p.76). The third reason for war, self-defence, does not require Security Council approval as it is recognised as an inherent right of states. This change in internationally accepted norms and laws that govern international conflict reflect the classification of offensive

Case Study Comparison

The application of the variables gleaned from *On War* has shown that the modern era wars share some of the same characteristics as those of the modern era. This does not mean that all of *On War* is universally valid, nor does it mean that Clausewitz is without fault or criticism. Instead, this comparison shows that, at the bare minimum, Clausewitz is still relevant in the grand scheme of contemporary strategic thought. An analysis of the results of the data reveals the following similarities and differences between the wars of Clausewitz’s time and the modern era:

The following table classifies the nine wars analysed according to the variables:

Clausewitzian Interstate Wars

			Reason for War	Conduct of War	
War	Date	Instigator	Political Objectives: Concessions or Submission or Overthrow	Offensive or Defensive war	Limited or Total War
War of Austrian	1740- 1748	Prussia	Concessions: Conquest and annexation of Silesia	Offensive	Limited
Seven Years' War	1756- 1763	Prussia	Concessions: Acquisition of Austrian territory	Offensive	Total/Limited War
War of the First Coalition	1792- 1797	Habsburg Empire	Submission: Overthrow of French Republic	Offensive	Total
War	Dates	Instigator	Reasons for War	Conduct of War	
Napoleonic	1803- 1815	France	Submission: Overthrow and creation of French Empire	Offensive	Total

Source: Fergusson, (2013, p.76).

Modern Interstate Conflicts 1990 – 2012.

War	Dates	Instigators perspective	Reasons for War		Conduct of the War	
			Major objective today	Major objective in Clausewitzian terms (Submission, concession or overthrow)	Offensive or Defensive	Limited or Total War
Gulf War	1990-1991	US	Expel Iraq from Kuwait	Submission	Defensive	Limited
Bosnian Independence	1992-1995	US-NATO	End armed conflict	Concessions	Defensive	Limited
Azerbaijan-Armenia	1993-1994	Armenia	Territorial Acquisition	Concession	Offensive	Limited
Ecuador-Peru	1995	Ecuador	Removing Peruvian patrols from disputed areas	Concession	Offensive	Limited
Eritrea-Ethiopia	1998-1999	Eritrea	Invasion of Disputed territory	Concession	Offensive	Limited
Kosovo	1999	US-NATO	End violence	Concession	Offensive	Limited
Pakistan-India	1999	Pakistan	Pakistani intrusion into Kashmir	Concession	Offensive	Limited
Invasion Afghanistan	2001-2014	US - NATO Coalition	Expel Osama bin Laden and Taliban	Submission	Defensive	Total
Invasion Iraq	2003-2011	US (Coalition of the willing)	Expel Saddam Hussein and destroy WMD	Overthrow	Offensive	Total

Source: Fergusson, (2013, p.76).

These tables then allow within time period comparisons and between time period comparisons. A review of the results suggests that half of Clausewitz’s wars have concession as a political objective while the other half is submissions. If we compare the dominant characteristics of modern wars, they too are mainly concessions. This means that the initial review suggests that Clausewitz’s wars and modern wars do share at least some similarities. Therefore, *On War may* still have merit today? In terms of the conduct of war, many of the Clausewitzian wars were offensive as are many of the modern variants. However, the wars' conduct is mixed; while Clausewitzian wars were aimed for total war, today’s are (mercifully) limited. This suggests that Clausewitz’s discussions of the nature of war, may, in fact, be of limited applicability to today’s wars.

Anti-Clausewitzian Perspectives of War

The first group of critics tends to reject Clausewitz based on temporal and/or logic arguments. This group is exemplified by Liddell Hart and John Keegan, both of whom are renowned experts in the field of war studies. John Keegan believes that Clausewitz’s theory is inherently flawed due to Clausewitz’s limited ability to understand war outside of the context of the old, European state system. In *A History of Warfare*, Keegan argues that Clausewitz was mistaken in his beliefs about the reasons for war, specifically the declaration that war is a continuation of politics. Liddell Hart, on the other hand, blamed Clausewitz for the catastrophe that was embedded in WWI and WW2, believing that it was Clausewitz’s teachings that were responsible for the focus on the offensive and the brutal war of attrition that was fought attempting to make war in reality reflect Clausewitz’s war in theory. Hart, therefore, criticises Clausewitz for his ideas about the conduct of war. John Keegan is a renowned military scholar and has published many books on strategy and warfare. Keegan analyses the phenomenon of warfare, seeking to gain an understanding of the causes and nature of warfare. For Keegan, war is an inherently cultural institution.

means. According to Keegan, war is definitely not the continuation of politics by other means. Keegan believes that Clausewitz is talking about *Western European* political interactions in his analysis of war as a political tool. Keegan analyses warfare by beginning with the question of whether violence and therefore, the organised violence that is warfare, is inherent to the human condition rather than a concerted tool of statecraft decided on by state leadership to achieve national interests. Keegan decides that he cannot prove this. After much debate, Keegan decides that war is a cultural phenomenon that can eventually be untaught. Even if Keegan’s thesis is correct, that war is a cultural phenomenon, it does not follow that Clausewitz’ theorem is incorrect (Moody,1979). To the contrary, it would seem that, in fact, Clausewitz and Keegan do agree on this point. For Clausewitz, the relationship between politics and strategy, and thus the relationship between politics and war, is about the nature of culture and society, but for different ends, a point Keegan ignores or assumes as irrelevant. Keegan believes that warfare is a fundamentally human institution based on cultural experiences, and that Clausewitz’s analysis of war is superficial and lacking in perspective.

In his book, *A History of Warfare (1993)*, Keegan begins by questioning one of the central theses of Clausewitzian thought; the idea of war as a continuation of politics by other

On the opening page of *A History of Warfare*, Keegan directly challenges Clausewitz by intentionally using the header, “What is War?” Keegan chooses to begin his analysis by

saying what war is not; "War IS NOT THE continuation of policy by other means. The world would be a simpler place to understand if this dictum of Clausewitz's were true" (Emphasis in original). Keegan argues that Clausewitz is too naïve in suggesting that decision-makers can turn on and off war. Keegan believes that war is more than politics, it is a part of our nature. Man is a war-making animal. He would conduct war whether or not specifically directed. Keegan, therefore, is more Hobbesian than a 21st-century war scholar. It is interesting to note that Clausewitz explains first and foremost that, "war is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." In other words, Keegan believes that war is inherent in human nature, whereas Clausewitz believes that war is a means to an end. Keegan thinks that Clausewitz's theory of warfare is incomplete because he is a man of his times. Accordingly, Clausewitz is merely a reflection of the European state system of which he was a member:

Clausewitz's thought is incomplete. It implies the existence of states, of state interests and of rational calculation about how they may be achieved. Yet war antedates the state, diplomacy and strategy by many millennia. Warfare is almost as old as man himself, and reaches into the most secret places of the human heart, places where self dissolves rational purpose, where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct is king. Man is a political animal....Clausewitz went no further than to say that a political animal is a war-making animal (Fergusson, 2013, p.76).

Keegan is proposing that war is more than rational actions. War cannot be controlled because it is about emotions and man's apparent animalistic nature. Clausewitz actually agrees with Keegan about this point, discussing these factors on the second page of *On War*. Not only does Clausewitz discuss the 'passionate' causes of war, but also he points out that the circumstances, institutions and so forth are determining factors in the conflict.

Keegan and Hart (1861) impression of Clausewitz was affected by what they saw as 'Clausewitz' in WWI. For Keegan, politics was not to be found in the practices of WWI. Keegan and Hart both believed that Clausewitz's theory provided for military domination over policy. Military leaders assumed absolute control over policy driving their nations towards victory for the sake of victory itself. As a further critique of the political nature of war, Keegan argues that WWI approached absolute war due to the separation of war from politics. The problem with this view is that Clausewitz clearly states that the absolute war's theoretical abstraction is never achievable due to the limiting factors that are extended upon war by the political realm. With this understanding, it becomes clear that WWI could not have been an absolute war because it is not achievable - absolute war is a theory only. With this in mind, it is important to reflect upon what Keegan said about WWI and absolute war or what Keegan refers to as 'true war':

In the First World War 'real war' and 'true war' rapidly became indistinguishable; the moderating influences which Clausewitz, as a dispassionate observer of military phenomena, had declared always operated to bring a war's potential nature

and actual purpose into adjustment dwindled into invisibility...The war's political objects were forgotten, political restraints were overwhelmed...politics even in the liberal democracies was rapidly reduced to a mere justification of bigger battles...Politics played no part in the conduct of the First World War worth mentioning (Fergusson, 2013, p.76).

Absolute war, in theory, is war without any limits. As destructive as WWI was, it was not a war without limits. No one disputes WWI was a horrible, bloody war, but it was not absolute war - violence without purpose, without political goals, without restraint, especially political restraint. For Keegan to argue that there were no political objectives in the war is faulty logic. The fact that the states' objectives in WWI changed throughout the course of the war suggests limits (in multiple forms for example, the number of fighting men, whether, new weapons) necessitate changes to battle plans. If there were no limits, there would be no need to change battle plans.

Hart (1961) criticism is also rooted in a belief that Clausewitz's theory is flawed. Hart criticised Clausewitz as being responsible for German militarism. Hart was also deeply affected by WWI's destruction, as he was a participant who saw, firsthand, the destruction and carnage of the Great War. This led him to be overly critical of Clausewitz, blaming him for the brutality of the war. Hart famously derided Clausewitz as the Mahdi of Mass. Hart, like Keegan, believes that Clausewitz's theory excuses military domination over policy. In his two books, *Strategy (1957)*, and *Thoughts on War (1954)*, Hart claims that Clausewitz is mistaken in his declaration that 'strategy is the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war':

One defect of this definition is that it intrudes on the sphere of policy, or the higher conduct of the war, which must necessarily be the responsibility of the government and not of the military leaders it employs as its agents in the executive control of operations. Another defect is that it narrows the meaning of 'strategy' to the pure utilisation of battle, thus conveying the idea that battle is the only means to the strategically end (Fergusson, 2013, p.76).

Hart criticises Clausewitz on the grounds that he believes that Clausewitz's theory allows for the intrusion by military strategists into a political matter, which are solely the jurisdiction of politicians. Hart offers a different definition of strategy; "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of the policy." Hart suggests that military commanders exercise too much control over policy. The problem is that similar to Keegan. He does not realise that he and Clausewitz share many of the same points. Clausewitz explains that strategy is used for the purpose of the war, which implies that Clausewitz recognises the military's subordination to political goals war is a tool of policy. Clausewitz argues throughout *On War* that every war is a reflection of its political reality. Hart was also extremely critical of Clausewitz because he believes that Clausewitz was the advocate of annihilation and slaughter. Hart believed that Clausewitz was the expositor of Napoleon. According to Hart, it was Clausewitz that had attempted to codify the 'Napoleonic spirit':

How arose this conception that the national goal in war could be attained only by mass destruction, and how did it gain so firm a hold on military thought? The decisive influence was exerted not by Napoleon himself, though his practical example of the beneficent results of 'absolute war' was its inspiration, but by his great German expositor, Carl Von Clausewitz. He was, in the years succeeding Waterloo, analysed, codified, and deified the Napoleonic method (Fergusson, 2013, p.76).

Paradoxically, Hart actually understood that Clausewitz was not an advocate of slaughter and annihilation battle. Yet, Hart blames Clausewitz's writing style, which he believes does not allow for most readers to understand Clausewitz's true ideas:

Unfortunately, his qualifications came on later pages, and were conveyed in philosophical language that befogged the plain soldier, essentially concrete minded. Such readers grasped the obvious implications of the leading phrases and lost sight of what followed owing to distance and obscurity...not one reader in a hundred was likely to follow the subtlety of his logic, or to preserve a true balance amid such philosophical jugglery. But everyone could catch such ringing phrases as 'we have only one means in war, the battle. 'Only great generals can produce great results.' 'Let us not hear of generals who conquer without (Fergusson, 2013, p.76).

An Appraisal of Clausewitz Theory of War

The notion of total war, the inner tendency of war to lead to extremes, which we consider to be the cornerstone of Clausewitz 's theory, is no longer important. War was essentially about the 'urge to settle' for Clausewitz, which was achieved by fighting, that is, by fighting between two warring parties, and that implied the need for speed and concentration; the suspension of belligerent action and the dispersion of armies, of course, took place, but in terms of deviations from the inner nature of war, it was explained. Today's wars are inconclusive, long-lasting, and seem to have spread, as opposed to the European wars of the 19th and 20th centuries. My argument is that this is because the inner essence of these wars is different. In this sense, the analysis of these wars by Clausewitz can be deeply counter-productive in the development of successful international strategies for both the effort to end these wars and the role of the military powers. On the other hand, there is something in Clausewitz 's argument that can help us think of alternate war approaches.

In the literal sense coming after Clausewitz, the sentence may be assumed to be post-Clausewitz. It builds on Clausewitz's methodological approach: the dialectic between the ideal and the real, and the need to integrate experience, empirical study and theory. It also accepts that, depending on how they are perceived, Clausewitz's significant suggestions, including the Trinitarian conception of war as a cause, a chance and an emotion; the primacy of politics or politics; and the instrumentalisation of war, remain very important. In particular, some of Clausewitz's realistic visions, such as his rumors of the essence of military genius, the notion of the center of gravity or the dependency on moral forces, play a significant role in contemporary

international military operations in crisis zones. But perhaps most importantly, in comparison to what has gone before, the 'new wars' of the 21st century can only be described, and our understanding of what has gone before, depends heavily on what we learn from reading "On War".

Finally, this study states unequivocally that Clausewitz would recognise the interstate wars of the modern era as the same phenomenon that he wrote about in *On War*. On the other hand, Clausewitz is still relevant to the study of modern interstate warfare. The military technological advancements that characterise the contemporary military may be unrecognisable to Clausewitz, but Clausewitz would still recognise the reasons for war and the conduct of war.

Conclusion

This article explored whether or not Carl von Clausewitz's theory of war is still relevant to modern interstate wars. This article specifically analysed the question of whether or not Clausewitz's arguments for the reasons for war, and its conduct, are still applicable in a modern context. In other words, if Clausewitz were alive today, would he recognise the interstate wars of the modern era, and the decisions made to engage in war? This question is critical to contemporary strategic studies because Clausewitz's work is at the center of other debates, specifically the RMA debate, as well as being a focal point for military study - especially by US forces. Clausewitz wrote *On War* more than 200 years ago, yet it remains the subject of numerous papers, books, and debates within the academic and military communities. This alone would suggest that there is some intrinsic value to *On War*. Even the most casual reader of military history and strategic studies would seem to be inclined to conclude that there must be something useful in *On War* that has allowed it to remain a staple of military education in the 21st century.

Clausewitz was both a soldier and a philosopher. *On War* was unique because Clausewitz reflected on both the reasons for war and the conduct of war. This was a novel approach to a study of the phenomenon of war as other analyses of war were focused exclusively upon one or the other. Clausewitz was a man of the 18th century Western European state system and, accordingly, was a reflection of his times. Clausewitz was different because he was able to realise that his theory of warfare needed to transcend his time period if it was truly to be a study of the nature of warfare.

Clausewitz explained that war's universal nature is reflected through these key characteristics: war is an act to force the enemy to do one's will, achieved by bringing the maximum amount of force upon the enemy. War, in reality, limits the exertion of force through several factors. Thus political considerations become the driving force behind war; these political factors are a reflection of the trinity (violence, chance, and rationality), which are also related to the people, military and government. Finally, the political act of achieving submission can also be achieved without the physical defeat of the enemy via a psychological or moral defeat.

Based on Clausewitz theory of war, it was possible to distinguish key variables that could be used to make a comparison between war, as explained in *On War*, and the wars of the modern era- the reasons for war and the conduct of war. The "On war" variable identified was the political

objective of war (submission, concession or overthrow). The conduct of war variables is offensive or defensive war and limited or unlimited war. For in-depth analysis of wars, this study compared Clausewitz's wars to modern interstate wars between 1990 and 2019. Clausewitz's approach to war is dialectical. On war, he uses polarities to rationalise a subject of great depth and breadth. Clausewitz consistently presents an observation with its opposite. Theory is set against the practice; moral forces are compared with physical force. Clausewitz can be separated from other military scholars by the 'wholeness' of his approach and the reality he brings to the discussion of war. There is attack, and there is defense. Clausewitz constructed a beautiful pendulum in explaining the phenomenon and philosophy of war.

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