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# Strategy in the 21st Century

The Continuing Relevance of Carl von Clausewitz

 Springer

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ISBN 978-3-030-46027-3      ISBN 978-3-030-46028-0 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46028-0>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction



**Abstract** Souchon presents select lines of thought and insights of Clausewitz’s theory and methods of implementation to improve the strategic culture in the twenty-first Century. This book pursues three objectives: The First is to present Clausewitz’s findings strictly based on his original work “Vom Kriege” (On War) from a present-minded perspective, interpret them in depth and highlight their timeless significance for understanding social conflicts. The Second is to expose the potential of the main elements in Clausewitz’s work and to show a methodology and depth of thought associated with strategic assessments in the twenty-first Century. The Third is to clarify whether these elements help in forming and implementing strategies and improving strategic culture as a whole. Souchon argues that this is the only appropriate approach to fathom the phenomena of twenty-first Century wars.

When the United Nations Security Council votes on 17 March 2011 a no-fly zone in Libya, Germany, Russia, and China abstain. This is a debacle for German security policy because it fails to support its closest allies, the USA, France and the United Kingdom in an important decision, without any consulting taking place *within* the Atlantic Alliance, and snubs them in the way it handles the making of a singular decision.

Another case of short-sighted strategic involvement is the armament and training of Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State in northern Iraq beginning 2014. The consequence is the strengthening of Kurdish ambitions to form a united Kurdistan upsetting the governments of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Similarly questionable is the German involvement in the civil war in Mali in 2016. This engagement is not the result of a sound strategic analysis but the attempt to help overstretched French forces.

The interests and goals of German security policy have not yet been defined in the reunified Germany. Under constant pressure from the media, which Peter Sloterdijk aptly calls stress producers (Sloterdijk, 2011), action is taken on the basis of the priorities of day-to-day politics, often intermingled with departmental and party politics, rather than in line with long-term political purposes, let alone a higher-level national strategy concept. Ministries struggling with bureaucratic busywork,



armed forces focused on day-to-day actions, political foundations and research institutions devoid of ideas and a scientific community concentrating on theory work mostly operate in isolation beside one another, though often seemingly against each other. The lack of specifics between the Chancellery and the ministries in the field of strategy, for example, the reality of interministerial staffing, party-political dictates and the basic overly cautious attitudes of some decision-makers reduce every result to the lowest common denominator. There is no courage to take important decisions with primary regard to the matters themselves. Multilateralism is a method in international relations, yet it is propagated as a strategy in German politics. Voting procedures in the European Union and NATO, which require every nation to approve decisions, force them to substantiate their positions. In Germany, however, the political will to define these positions does not exist.

A national security strategy or grand strategy defines values, interests, risks, goals and methods of action at regular intervals, sets priorities, links the political will to the methods and means for implementing it and is a subject of public debate. Models in the use of such a procedure are to be found in France, the United Kingdom and the USA. A grand strategy is only practical if the public is informed consistently and thoroughly and given the opportunity to get involved. Intensive communication and critical discussion with all the institutions of political and social relevance are required to devise a strategy and ensure its continuity.

If Germany could exist as a land of bliss, policy-making without a strategy would be a possibility. As it cannot, however, the lack of a strategy renders it a less oriented and often unpredictable actor in international politics in Europe, the North Atlantic world and at the global level.

The transformation from a bipolar world order to a polycentric disorder opens powers such as China, Russia and India possibilities for their struggle to increase strategic influence in global politics. The situation is extremely dangerous due to Russia's occupation of the Crimean Peninsula and East Ukraine and China's military outward reach for Islands in the South China Sea. Smaller nations like Iran, North Korea struggle for nuclear weapons is destabilizing regional orders. Japan, South Korea, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are forced to review their own political commitments.

The security of the European states is threatened in the twenty-first Century by numerous state failures in North Africa and in the Broader Middle East. This opens the door in the Arab States for religious wars, organised crime and mass migration. Terrorist opponents take advantage of grey areas in which they generate initiatives and conduct their attacks where and when they choose. They are strongly influenced by religion, ideologies and the cultural traditions, disregard international legal norms and Western moral standards and often approvingly accept dying for their causes. The Western armies fielded to fight these adversaries are tangled to occidental principles, the strict observance of international law and are conducted under the public pressure to minimize fatalities and casualties. The tectonic shift in the nature of these armed conflict has not yet been fully grasped. The lengthy NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan is merciless in the way it reveals this failure.

European Nations are particularly affected by the lack of strategic culture. There are two ways to remedy this. One is to establish a modern and competent strategy consulting body for governments that is able to identify *ex ante* the main security risks and challenges and do the groundwork for strategic decisions to be made, proceeding holistically and looking to the future. The other is to provide up-and-coming executive personnel education in strategic thinking so that they learn how to do practical work with a greater strength of mind for the purpose of achieving political goals with the allotted means.

Strategy consultation can only be successful if it calls for rational, matter-of-fact analyses and assessments and a methodical discussion and consideration of possible solutions *prior to* an event. A consultation project of this kind is difficult to implement as all the higher military and civilian educational institutions provide superficial instruction on the concepts and strategies of NATO, the European Union and select countries, but do not go into them in depth. In addition, major institutions tend not to teach their up-and-coming executive personnel to think for themselves, to engage in critical discourse and to act with courage, but rather to efficiently achieve pre-defined goals under stringent conditions. This does not permit holism, critical discussion and logical transparency. It is time to provide select future leaders targeted education that gives them a command of strategic thinking. How can this be achieved?

First, it is necessary to define the German term *Politik* and the words *war*, *primacy of politics* and *strategy*. Then, it is necessary to define a *standpoint* and the resulting *political purposes*. What is true has to be distinguished from what is false and logically substantiated. In complicated areas of international politics, a stringent connection between theory and reality must be established. Finally, it is necessary to bring in approaches that take account of the character traits and leadership qualities of the political and military decision-makers, while not forgetting the influence of *probability and chance*. The wisdom of Clausewitz's strategy theory extends far beyond the realm of security policy and can be applied both to a business enterprise's disputes over markets or hostile takeovers and to the development of a value-based management culture within large companies.

International interventions most often lack clearly stated *political purposes*. Equally important aspects are ultimate and intermediate goals, strict deadlines, and the ability to evaluate the opponent's actions professionally and proactively during a mission and to respond to them effectively. Without a strategy and prior assessment of the relation between purpose and means, soldiers are ordered into action with a patchwork of tactical targets and in the end blamed for not having achieved the vaguely framed goals. What is called for is a method of thinking that is in line with Kant's *sapere aude*. The ability to understand the challenges of today in their entirety, to structure them and to develop possible solutions to them is becoming an important resource in modern security policy affairs and setting standards in the selection and education of future elites.

There is no modern, present-minded interpretation of Clausewitz's method of thinking and pith of what he writes that supports the study of his principles and their application to problems related to international politics, the armed forces or the

economy in the twenty-first century. So far, there has only been sectoral research on the focal points with which, a classification scheme in which and intensity levels at which Clausewitz can be used for analysing a war and advising decision-makers. To holistically understand and evaluate concrete decision-making situations on the foundation of Clausewitz's theory and develop options for strategic action, it is necessary to create a universally applicable edifice of ideas. Concrete notions on this issue are presented in the following section.

This study offers strategy scholars a foundation for their studies of strategy based on Clausewitz's theory in a clear and simple language. It is in addition a structured compendium that forms a theoretical foundation for specific lines of thought and action and develops distinct ideas for implementing them in present and future security policy affairs. The book starts with a political science style introduction to the subject of war as a part of social life and not of art or science. It reveals how late in the history of man unbridled conquests combined with the brutal expansion of power or the struggle of societies for survival became subjects of theoretical reflection. The history of strategy undoubtedly begins with the Greeks. Nevertheless, holistic definitions of strategy are not found until the eighteenth Century. We currently live in an extended period of peace, but a look at European history shows that this state is the exception rather than the rule. Many major wars of the past began with a number of minor ones that first flared up in separate trouble spots and only later combined to form devastating conflagration, with their strategic dimensions only having been grasped in hindsight. There are numerous minor wars today in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and South America. The inability to deal with these wars is blatant. This means that the dimensions and characteristics of the dangerous challenges of the early twenty-first Century have so far been neither recognised nor understood holistically. Hence, future consequences cannot be estimated soundly.

This book examines and answers the question of what a strategist can learn from a social science thinker who developed his ideas in the context of his experiences in the Napoleonic era. It all depends on how Clausewitz's analyses and findings are used. Formulated with philosophical acumen, the timeless axioms created by Carl von Clausewitz build upon a broad interpretation of the historical setting. His theory of war focuses on what is genuinely perceptible and can be verifiably accounted for and assessed by means of facts. This phenomenological approach, coupled with classical rationality, reveals the essence of war. Clausewitz deals with politics, war, peace and strategy in a holistic context and presents his findings with elaborate philosophical abstraction. This hermeneutic interpretation of reality, the resulting consequences and their abstraction are an important method of gaining knowledge. When applied to real events, his theory is of timeless value and indispensable to us in the twenty-first Century.

This book depicts Carl von Clausewitz's background, his development and the pith of what he states as a Prussian war theoretician. He benefits from a unique philosophical climate in Berlin. The plan to provide education in strategic thinking, strategic action and strategy development in the twenty-first Century does not hence start at scratch and can be implemented holistically and substantially if it is thought

through, ordered, abstracted and framed along the lines of the pith of what Clausewitz states. My study presents an interpretation strictly oriented on Clausewitz's "Vom Kriege" in correlation to select aspects of his theory from a twenty-first Century perspective. It argues that his theory can be applied in the methodical formation of strategies for responding to terrorist forms of war and the lack of power on the part of collective institutions and individual nations to do so effectively.

My book is a result of the enhancement of the international reputation of Clausewitz's work in the past few decades due to numerous representations and historical interpretations of it in German, English, French, Russian, Japanese and many other languages. There is a wide range of specialist literature on Clausewitz, the most prominent examples being the theoretical works of Hahlweg, Paret, Howard, Bassford, Aron, Schössler, Strachan and Echevarria II.

In contrast, Carl von Clausewitz's key findings and their operationalization are only discussed in a small segment of contemporary literature on war. The complexity of the aforementioned dichotomous statements and the extensive body of secondary literature, which mostly focuses on military history or the textual interpretation of the philosophical methodology, constitute a major obstacle to the implementation of Clausewitz's work. I have no knowledge of any convincing text exegesis of *On War*—in a comprehensible, interesting and plausible fashion—coupled with hermeneutic interpretations of his findings that are based on a holistic perspective and are apt for analysing future challenges.

This book has three objectives. The first is to present Clausewitz's findings strictly oriented on his original work "Vom Kriege" from a present-minded perspective, interpret them in depth and highlight their timeless significance for understanding social conflicts. The second is to expose the potential of the main elements in Clausewitz's work and to show the methodology and depth of thought associated with strategic considerations in the twenty-first Century. The third is to clarify whether these elements help in forming and implementing strategies and in improving the strategic culture as a whole. While often overlapping, these objectives also severely diverge.

In other words, the intention is to use Clausewitz's findings to fathom the phenomena of twenty-first Century wars. This is the only approach that enables these phenomena to be comprehended, tendencies and belligerent actors to be grasped and strategic thinking and action to be developed. As outlined before, this approach to analysing the theory of war is designed to serve as a seminal work for the education or self-education of future leaders—be they commanders, politicians, presidents or CEOs—or guide them in their private studies. Great commanders are not born as such—their knowledge and skills are the products of their intensive study of the theory of war and their practical experience. Likewise, strategies are not the fruit of inspiration but have to be developed methodically and purposefully on the basis of the ground-breaking findings that have evolved over the last few centuries.

Here is a brief summary of this genesis. Thought starts to be given to the command of large armies about two thousand five hundred years ago, at the time of Confucius. The military objective of defeating an opponent without a fight is said

to be an important insight of *Sun Tzu*, the Chinese strategist (approx. 550–480 B.C.). His principles on waging war with circumspection are of timeless value. From the Greek thinkers to the Roman, from *Machiavelli* to *Frederick the Great*, numerous figures in history have sought to grasp the characteristics of war and put them down in writing. Most of these works can only be understood in the context of the period in which they were written and in association with the arsenals, military capabilities and tactics of their day and do not contain any statements that are of lasting importance to us.

Two early nineteenth Century theoreticians on strategy *Carl von Clausewitz* and *Antoine-Henri Jomini*, established contrary schools of thought that are still highly relevant today. The two scholars include analytic observation and the demand for knowledge, reason and responsibility in political and military action in the development of theories on war. Both provide ways of thinking for analysing war that take account of both intellect and reason.

Jomini is considered a systematician with respect to warfare who goes in almanac fashion and abides by the rules in structuring Napoleon's campaigns in his mind, focusses his analyses on battles and publishes his set of rules and recommendations for the successful commander in *The Art of War* (1837). He has the unique ability to grasp all the facets and difficulties inherent in a strategic situation and to predict how it will develop. Before the Russian Campaign, Jomini forecasts operational and logistic bottlenecks and the possibility of failure to Napoleon I, but is not taken seriously. The disaster encountered by the French Army during the Russian Campaign (1812/13) and its subsequent rout confirm Jomini's assessment (Cf. Langendorf, 2008, 243). A digression in the sixth chapter is devoted to his work.

Effectively acting as an opposite to Jomini and his abidance by the rules, Clausewitz abstracts war on the theoretical level, distinguishes its core elements and phenomena and sets them in relation to the superordinate policy in *On War*. His terminological precision, logic, dichotomous way of thinking and careful consideration of the elements, which he combines in an abstract overview of the tendencies and characteristics of wars, bear important testimony to the history of ideas and enjoy high international recognition. Heuss honours Clausewitz's work, saying that "because the intellectual exactitude of the book emphasises what is lasting and simple, the work of a logician who knows how to talk about his subject with linguistic force and yet with a kind of grace." (Heuss, 1951, 67) In his analysis entitled "*Clausewitz-Engels-Mahan: Grundriss einer Ideengeschichte militärischen Denkens*" and published in 2009, Schössler calls for an in-depth study of Clausewitz's findings: "What matters, though, is that I believe it takes an eye trained to understand Hegel or the entire classical philosophy to discover such dimensions in the text *On War*." (Schössler, 2009, 106).

This highlights the dilemma. The casual reader quotes Clausewitz *à la carte* to enhance the legitimacy of his arguments without taking the effort to fathom their deeper meaning. Others, such as *Aron* and *van Creveld*, distort Clausewitz's statements by reducing the meaning of the Fascinating Trinity, as the German term *Wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit* is now known in English, to the people, the army and the government and then dismissing him as an apologist for wars between countries

and battles of annihilation. The British strategist *Liddle Hart* accuses Clausewitz of having expressed his theory of war in a far too abstract and complicated way. Without expanding on the substance of Clausewitz's statements, he polemically says: "By the iteration of such phrases Clausewitz blurred the outlines of his philosophy, already indistinct, and made it into a mere marching refrain—a Prussian *Marseillaise* which inflamed the blood and intoxicated the mind. In transfusion it became a doctrine fit to form corporals not generals. . .and reduced the art of war to the mechanics of mass-slaughter." (Liddle Hart, 1967, 355) This emotional criticism, which is based on dubious assumptions, reveals the differences in the levels of mental abstraction. Liddle Hart cultivates an image of military forces "tended to ensure that the forces were composed of good 'fighting animals'." (ibid. 353).

Clausewitz's ideas on how to comprehend war and strategy and his demands on commanders- or, by analogy, on decision-makers in politics and business—are above those of 'fighting animals' and are of lasting value to strategic thinking to this day. His book is neither a compendium of military doctrine, nor a field manual nor a dogmatic set of rules for supreme commanders. It is utterly wrong to abstract and classify his work as such.

Clausewitz abstracts war across its spectrum as the continuation of politics and condemns any immature criticism in the *Two Notes by the Author (On War, 69 f.—see excerpts in Chap. 4.1)*. Offering us a theory with philosophical arguments, he does not confine himself to the character of war, but also analyses human factors, the *moral qualities* of the commander—meaning his intellect and temperament—and the virtues of the army. He was not yet 24 years old when he developed his first theses and devises basic ideas on the subject of strategy to which he will adhere all his life. It is not until the end of his period of activity (approx. 1827–1830) that he manages to systematically integrate these ideas into an overarching whole (Cf. Aron, 1980, 25).

Almost two hundred years later, there is still intensive interest in his theory, which lays bare the innermost characteristics of social conflicts and the very own relations in them. He comprehends the rational, irrational and emotional elements of war as a single phenomenon and war itself as an instrument of policy. Having carefully studied 130 campaigns and spoken about experiences to Gneisenau, who witnessed the fighting on the side of the 13 North American colonies opposing British colonial rule, Clausewitz defines the characteristics and dependencies of the wars waged during his era. Convincing in their logic and precision, though not always transparent, in their wording due to the language of his day, his lines of thought are so complex and comprehensive that they arouse great interest among military commanders, scientists, politicians, and even economists to the present day. In contrast to the theses of eighteenth and nineteenth Century philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Fichte and Kiesewetter, Clausewitz's empirical analyses of war are grounded in his own experiences. He selects core elements of war and their relations and elaborates on them. His theoretical analyses and practical assessments, which he structures dichotomously and condenses deductively at varying levels of consideration, form a logical whole.

On the other hand, Clausewitz does not leave us a consistent compendium, but an inductive collection of material in varying states of editing which he collected over decades, but did not put into any final order. Concentrating on the basic ideas helps to overcome many difficulties. Once the gist and characteristics of the most important arguments, principles and recommendations are laid bare, timeless conclusions can be drawn. Clausewitz provides the intellectual assistances for this.

For our scientific and military analysis purposes, we use a selection of basic elements of his theory to comprehend the paradigmatic wars of the twenty-first Century and understand their characteristics. In times of insecurity or radical political change or in view of dangerous combinations of risks, studying the pith of what he wrote gives a lot of food for thought and valuable insights that help us to grasp the essence of war, the overall situation, important factors, frictions and demands on the moral qualities of the actors systematically and holistically, to show how they bear relation to each other and to evaluate them. Of course, the train of thought, argument, choice of words and style of writing of a German classic cannot meet modern expectations of language. It is rather a knowledge of history and philosophy, a great skill in abstract thinking and a certain feel for language that are of particular advantage for interpreting his work.

Carl von Clausewitz is a Prussian war theoretician who describes the essence of war and synthesises the dichotomous acquisition of knowledge about war in the form of the *Fascinating Trinity*, which combines *primordial violence* and the *play of probability and chance* with the *instrument of policy* (See Chap. 3). This description and synthesis are unique in that they offer intellectual freedom for strategic thinking and action. They reveal the characteristics of events in their entirety, permit hermeneutical access to the rationality of purposeful action while account is taken of the effects of probability and chance and allow a grasp to be gained of the impact of emotionality and moral factors on the actual course of each war. In accordance with Hegel's logic of essence, they are an enduring link between the explicit state of war and the implicit events in a war. They are an intermediary between being and acting in war.

Clausewitz's ideas are particularly helpful for specifically identifying the essential features in complex twenty-first Century decision-making situations, structuring them and developing possible courses of action. This interdisciplinary interpretation of his theory is developed as an independent approach in this book. Experience shows that, things being as they are, knowledge, understanding and mastery of Carl von Clausewitz's ideas enable effective structures to be established for estimates of the situations in today's wars in Asia, the Middle East, Africa as well as South America, a profound understanding of the factors to be gained and holistic assessments of the actors involved to be made and prevent superficial entanglement in the backward-looking way of thinking that is common today.

When the tendencies and factors of the *Fascinating Trinity*, for example, are applied to theatres of war around the world, it is possible to identify *the opponent*, the *play of forces* and the impacts of *primordial violence*, *hatred and enmity* and to evaluate their relations in terms of an overarching whole from the points of view of a politician and a commander. When the situation in an international operation is

complex, analysing it by means of the Fascinating Trinity, the appropriateness of means, which is established by comparing one's own capabilities with those of the opponent, and the relation between purpose, objective and means can foster clarity of thought in strategic thinking and substantially improve individual judgement. This logical sequence of steps, from the theory to specific case studies and practical application, can yield key findings for shaping future security policy. If this is achieved, the admittedly difficult discursion into Clausewitz's theory can be considered highly successful.

This study is structured so as to present the development of strategic thinking on the basis of the pith of what Clausewitz stated, with the Fascinating Trinity as their synthesis, and to postulate how advantageous use could be made of it in the present day.

The *first* chapter outlines the history of Europe as a belligerent genesis up to the tectonic changes following the East-West confrontation from the political science point of view. The very first strategic question concerning the motives for and causes of war renders it interesting to look at Prussia and the French Revolution because the relationship between the middle classes and war is still the determining social element of war today.

In the twenty-first century, mass-army wars between countries fighting to defend their territories against a clearly identified enemy have become a rare fringe issue. They have been replaced by hybrid wars in geographically remote regions against terrorist groups. The opponent fights covertly, using light weapons and taking advantage of his familiarity with the local conditions. He learns fast and is quick in adapting his action to changes in the situation. Fighting such an opponent is a very difficult challenge. The fundamental change in the character of wars at the beginning of the twenty-first Century calls for commanders to be educated in strategic thinking and—building on this—the method of waging war to be modified.

The use of Clausewitz's theory in strategic analyses of future wars demands two steps to be taken that provide the necessary knowledge: The first one, taken in the *fourth* chapter, involves the portrayal of the situation in Prussia at the beginning of the nineteenth Century, the life and work of Carl von Clausewitz in the light of his day and the belligerent and philosophical milieus in which he socialises. Previously a great power, Prussia is degraded to a French satellite state after its defeat in 1806. The end of Prussia's independence and rational politics and its vassal-like submission to Napoleon's sceptre inspire enormous reform in both the social domain and the military that is backed up by a revolution in education. Prussia's social reorganisation takes place in a climate of political creativity and is marked by an immense intellectual profundity. This is then followed by a discussion of three interpretations of Clausewitz's theory: the historical, the philosophical and the present-minded interpretations. In the subsequent chapters, primarily the third interpretation, the one related to the present, combines with the profound understanding of meanings of philosophical words and of reality as a process to form a holistic basis for analysing and assessing wars and the consequences for strategic thinking in the future.



The *fifth* chapter focuses on what are the known and most frequently quoted characteristics and pith of *On War* from the strategy point of view: the Fascinating Trinity, the appropriateness of means, the relation between purpose, objective and means, the frictions as well as the moral factors and the virtues of the army. They are subjected to a profound and holistic textual interpretation from a reality-based point of view. Success is achieved in interpreting the entire content of *On War* because text passages from throughout the book are arranged according to their subject and interpreted within the overall context.

The *sixth* chapter contains explanations of the elementary notions that constitute the key building blocks of Clausewitz's theory: form and content, types of wars, government and armed forces, theory and practise, strategy and war plan. It shows how they relate to each other and features conclusions.

The *seventh* chapter describes characteristics of twenty-first Century hybrid wars in the light of global networking, the confrontation between the rich and the poor, limited resources and climate change. Combinations of fundamental Islamist hypertextterrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failing states and organised crime that are intensified by cyberspace attacks are forcing the Western community to now reassess all strategic approaches thoroughly, instead of only rudimentarily, as it has done so far. Sight has been lost in recent years of the exceptional importance of strategy for long-term success in coping with the problems posed by purpose-based political practice. Well-founded evaluations of factual information and decision-making procedures that take account of all factors of social life are non-existent at the strategy level. These striking deficits are known and rudimentary attempts to remove them by means of tactical-level activities are being made. In establishing excellence clusters, the *Clausewitz Network for Strategic Studies* has embarked on a promising path to counter them permanently.

In the *eighth* chapter, the interpretation of Clausewitz's war theory is applied to the situations in a selection of wars at the beginning of the twenty-first Century. His basic ideas are shown to be assisting substantially in reforming strategic assessments of current wars. Concrete conclusions are drawn on how Clausewitz's theory can be used to educate future strategists and to establish a new culture in strategic thinking and action. Finally, a methodological approach to government-level strategy consulting is presented.

The objective of my book is to remove strategic deficits in post-modern states in accordance with Clausewitz's doctrine. This requires presenting an intellectual foundation for a strategy culture in the twenty-first Century and offering a course of study that educates the minds of future leaders and commanders. "Theory then becomes a guide to anyone who wants to learn about war from books; it will light his way, ease his progress, train his judgment, and help him to avoid pitfalls." (*On War*, 141) It is essential that the knowledge and holistic way of thinking conveyed are unique from today's point of view, in conformity with the pith of what Carl von Clausewitz wrote and combined with practical experience so as to lead to the acquisition of mastery.

The key finding of Clausewitz's theory "is meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self – education." (*On War*,

141) *On War* is written by Clausewitz as a libretto for the education of commanders. I have written this study to flashlight through the complexity of his work and to operationalise his findings with regard to the challenges in the twenty-first century in a credible and comprehensible way. It is intended to bridge the gap between findings of the early nineteenth Century and strategy of our times.

This book opposes the denunciation of Clausewitz's work as a set of outdated instructions for a Ludendorff-style total war. Due to its sober analysis, the focus of which is on the essence of Clausewitz's theory, and the conclusions drawn for wars in the twenty-first century, it also counters any apologetic or doctrinaire glorification. Finally, "especially the most abstract terms cannot be understood without the historical experiences that have gone into them." (Senghaas, 1980, 335) A number of terms need to be clarified in order to make this study easier to comprehend. This is done in the following chapter.

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# Chapter 2

## Terminology



**Abstract** Souchon focus is on the essence of Clausewitz’s theory, and the conclusions drawn for conflicts in the twenty-first century, it also counters any apologetic or doctrinaire glorification or unreflected criticism. Souchon shows that the well-known English translation of Clausewitz’s book by Howard and Paret title *On War* contains many inaccuracies. These liberal translations lead to ambiguities, misunderstandings and misinterpretations. The key terminology of Clausewitz’s original German book get new interpreted from today’s point of view. This is necessary in order to allow a basic understanding to be established of the essence of Clausewitz’s writings, which date from the early nineteenth century. A thoughtful reflection of the key terminology—including their historical background—is presented in this chapter.

Prior to an analysis of the basic elements of Clausewitz’s theory, it is useful to clarify the German term *Politik* (*politics, policy and polity*) and the notions of *strategy* and *war* from today’s point of view in order to allow a basic understanding to be established of the essence of Clausewitz’s writings, which date from the early nineteenth century.

### The German Term *Politik*

The German term describes the sum of all the attempts made *to shape public life*. It must be seen as a continuous process of rational behaviour and purposeful action in which states rival with each other over the assertion of their ideas and achievement of their goals and in which they are influenced from both within and without (Cf. Haftendorn, 2007). *Politik* is a time-based process in which necessary decisions are made after interest-based options have been examined and the limitations on means have been taken into account. In modern European states, *Politik* can be categorised by subject areas (e.g., foreign, defence and education policy), by

decision-making levels (e.g., European, national or regional politics) and by interest groups (e.g., parties, trade unions or churches).

Having long been so in the Anglo-Saxon countries, it is now understood generally that the term *Politik* has three dimensions. In the sense of the English word *policy*, it is used to denote longer-term programmes of state or social relevance based on interests, general values and world views. In the sense of the English word *politics*, it furthermore stands for purposeful action within an overarching whole aimed at forming a will and making and implementing decisions (e.g., on education, healthcare and defence). Finally, in the sense of the English word *polity*, *Politik* is reflected in political institutions and structures established in accordance with universally binding rules of social communities or states, e.g., in parties, in a cabinet, in ministries and in parliament). (Cf. Strickmann, 2008, 74 ff.)

Clausewitz sees *Politik* as the intelligence of the personified state, but does not substantiate his view. He uses the term to denote long-term political orientation and specific political action. *Politik* is frequently found in *On War*, while *Staatspolitik* (state policy) is used only once. “One clings to the word ‘government’ without recognising that Clausewitz takes it to mean the political leadership in general.” (Paret, 2008, 2) Paret distinguishes between *Politik* and *Regierung* (government) while emphasizing the general connection between them. He argues that Clausewitz gives the impression of state policy and government meaning one and the same thing: “That at all times, even in the case of a people without complex political institutions, the same interdependencies between war and policy exist and need to be analysed, no matter whether it is a prehistoric pastoral tribe or, as he puts it, ‘semibarbarous Tartars’, an empire or a nineteenth century republic.” (ibid.) This interpretation is important because numerous critics wrongly cite the term *Politik* as proof that Clausewitz’s work is solely applicable to the level of states.

Clausewitz similarly uses the term state policy in his *Two Notes by the Author* (*On War*, 69 f.). He refers to war as *the* continuation of state policy, an act carried out by a cohesive community that is formed by a common politico-social constitution (Cf. Delbrück, 1907, 1 ff.). “It can be taken as agreed that the aim of policy is to unify and reconcile all aspects of internal administration as well as of spiritual values, and whatever else the moral philosopher may care to add. Policy, of course, is nothing in itself; it is simply the trustee for all these interests against other states. That it can err, subserve the ambitions, private interests, and vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there.” (*On War*, 606).

Clausewitz generally defines *policy* as being simply the trustee for all these interests against other states. He generally regards policy “as representative of all interests of the community.” (*On War*, 607).

Woermann concludes about the humanist Clausewitz: “By understanding war as the continuation of this very policy by the means of force, he also sees peace as a political act of progressive reconciliation of interests which dispenses with this very means of force.” (Woermann, 2007, 35) Clausewitz distinguishes himself by his great analytical precision because his complementary classification into war and peace includes all the stages in between.

<i>Hahweg Vom Kriege: Begriffe</i>	<i>Howard/Paret On War: English Translation</i>
Niederwerfung	defeat, overthrow, disarming, overcome, subjugation
Zweck	aim, object, purpose, end, goal, requirement
Ziel	military aim
Akt (Final)	action
Halbding	halfthings, half-hearted war
Politik	politics, policy
Politisch	policy, political, statesman, statecraft
Wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit	wondrous trinity, miraculous trinity, paradoxical trinity
Takt des Urteils	fascinating trinity judgement, intuitive judgement, discriminate
Hauptlineamente	judgement, instinct of judgement
Moralische Größen	lines of thought, main ideas, main features morals, moral factors.

**Fig. 2.1** Vom Kriege—German Terms and their English Translations in On War (Honig, 2007, 60)

In their path—breaking English version of *Vom Kriege*, Howard and Paret translate the term *Politik* by *policy* and rarely by *politics*. Due to what is classified as a liberal translation and an excellent interpretative choice of words, they succeed in improving the readability of the English version compared to the original text. Inaccuracies in the translation of the original text are deliberately accepted. Single German terms are often rendered by several English words (See Fig. 2.1).

The fact that several English words are used for one and the same German term creates some inconsistencies and inaccuracies that can lead to ambiguities, misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Clausewitz’s choice of terms is a mystery anyway. For example, he uses the term *Zweck* (purpose) for every matter he wants to describe and analyse. He uses it 219 times altogether in his work, though without elaborating on its connotations. There is no correlation to be found in his work between purpose and the orders or goals that may arise in politics and have to be achieved by military force. Nor is there any indication of purpose being tied to a specific form of government: a federal republic, monarchy or dictatorship.

In this study, the word *purpose* in the relation between purpose, objective and means is correlated with the political end state that has to be achieved. Ultimate and intermediate goals are derived from the overarching political purpose and pursued at the level of the commander and his army. This correlation is chosen with an eye to the clarity of thought and hermeneutic comprehensibility of the exegesis of *On War*. It initially excludes the goals in other fields of politics.

The situation is similar as regards the German term *Instrument*, which is used very frequently in the text and translated into English as *instrument* and *tool*. The famous phrase “War is an instrument of policy” (*On War*, 605) implies that Clausewitz considers war a means serving a specific political purpose. Elsewhere, he uses the term to describe actions or tactical matters, writing, for example, “A march that is not part of an engagement is thus a tool of strategy” (*On War*, 129) or “A flank position ... is a very effective instrument ...” (*On War*, 416). In present-day parlance, the term *instrument* is mostly used in the sense of a tool. This follows a certain inherent logic. Further inaccuracies in language and inconsistencies in

definitions can be found in the use of the terms *frictions*, *probability* and *chance*. These are examined more closely in Chap. 5.

In contrast to Vom Kriege a multitude of copies of the English version, entitled *On War*, have been sold, translated into virtually every language and are used all over the world as an important basic document for interpreting Clausewitz, even though the English version does not handle the terms with the same precision as Clausewitz's original text. Translating an English interpretation of Clausewitz into German, together with text passages from Kant and Hegel, and then publishing it is going entirely too far.

## Strategy

The discussion of the term *strategy* calls for account to be taken of the host of historical connotations and modern interpretations that exist. The endeavour to comprehend wars and to systemise conclusions is in line with the mechanistic world view described above. After the Thirty Years' War, cabinet wars and wars between countries are primarily an instrument of the ruling monarchs, who use armed forces in a purposefully rational manner to impose their political will. The world wars of the twentieth century link strategy to almost all areas of human existence as a result of the global alliances that they prompt and the scale of the destruction that the area bombing causes. Total mobilisation is followed by total war. The development of the nuclear bomb constitutes another quantum leap, providing man with a weapon suitable for destroying large parts of the global civilisation. A strategy that is confined to waging a nuclear war is of less value.

The manifestation of international Islamist terrorism, as mentioned earlier, the disintegration of states and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are combining to form an unexpectedly complex threat scenario that is formatively influenced in its development by the acceleration of time—meaning the speed of change—and exacerbated by cyberspace attacks. Taking strategic action in the twenty-first century means combining the use of global, transnational, regional and intra-societal methods in media and financial worlds that are networked in real time. Migration and refugee movements, the proliferation of weapons, international crime, vulnerable sea lines of communication and export markets as well as the vicious circle of poverty, overpopulation, the overexploitation of resources, corruption and violence, accompanied by huge natural disasters and climate change, are all factors that must be taken into account in a strategic analysis. These global combinations of risks are being intensified by the economic and military development of future powers such as the People's Republic of China and the populous democracy of India.

In view of these multifaceted dangers, there is a need for the innermost aspects of strategy to be decoded and methods of exerting influence and shaping developments to be established and communicated in a public discourse via mass media and social network resources. With an eye to the link between purpose and means, there is a

need for strategic thinking to be remodelled on the basis of the following questions: What action do I take if something unexpected happens? What alternatives do I have and what reserves are at my disposal? What can be seen instead is that refuge is being sought in short-term political hyperactivity and illusion, and this is no longer adequate to deal with the dimensions of the problems in the twenty-first century. The change not only in the quality of events, but also in their dynamics demands a critical look to be taken at current methods of thinking and acting.

Some decisive prerequisites must be met to successfully implement political ideas against the will of rivals. Purposively rational political goals must be defined as guideline; the required means must be provided; the supreme commanders must have the necessary skills. Their acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills is the result of years of intensive training and education aimed at imparting the theory behind what they experience in practice. The proper skills are the result of a combination of sound training and education as well as practical experience. Strategic plans should comprise a variety of holistic options, and the most advantageous one should be implemented. If this path is barred, alternatives and branch plans to which careful thought has been given beforehand must be put into place.

A synergy between the government and the armed forces can only be achieved on the basis of purpose, a basic knowledge of each other's characteristics and rational cooperation, with account being taken of important factors. Such a synergy equally obliges the government and the armed forces to assess the strategic situation jointly and requires use to be made of the armed forces' expertise in examining the possible courses of action, presenting the consequences of specific approaches and developing balanced recommendations that then serve as a basis for making decisions that fit into the overall political context. The primacy of politics applies. Following the in-depth discussion and careful consideration of the options, the government decides on the courses of action that are to be taken. There is a wide misconception about this. The primacy of politics is a dynamic principle that must be conceived as focussing on the result. While the government and the armed forces are equally involved in the close and careful assessment of matters, it is the government that makes the decisions. The primacy of politics does not prohibit the armed forces from speaking and thinking about security issues and must not be misinterpreted as the primacy of politicians.

## **Military Strategy**

A strategy, generally speaking, links will and action. It is the transformation of policy into a military course of action and specifies its purpose, the way it is to be implemented and the required means must be assigned. Strategy takes account of the interactive action of an equal opponent and the frictions that arise from events. It covers conceptual, organisational and mental dimensions of the decision-making process and contains rules. It can only really be used for the specified overarching

purpose, with all the relevant problem areas and their complex dimensions being taken into consideration in a war plan.

Decoding the inner aspects of military strategy requires recognition of the characteristics of the overall situation regarding the governments and people involved, the strengths and weaknesses of the courses of action likely to be taken by the enemy, the possible effects of *probability and chance*, and this must be done in an hostile environment influenced by culture, religion and tradition. Without comprehension, every decision-making process and every strategy are doomed to failure. Taking action in an environment marked by friction, under pressure due to the inability to foresee events and under extreme physical strain requires a combination of mental and emotional strength.

A strategy is therefore a theory applied to coordinate diverse fields of activity in such a way as to maintain the ability of self-determination and achieve essential overarching purposes even in the face of resistance and friction (See Chap. 6).

A military strategy is the tool that enables the government to exert a guiding influence on the armed forces with regard to warfare. It is an interactive link between the government and the military. Clausewitz uses the term *war plan* synonymously with military strategy to refer to a mechanism that linked the government with the commander and his forces. In compliance with the *primacy of politics*, a war plan defines the objective of the use of military force and determines the appropriate means for achieving it. The classic idea that a military strategy is a heavy tome and developed meticulously by a general staff over a lengthy period of time seems completely absurd in the information age, dominated as it is by Google, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Networked competences and holistic synergetic thinking and action in near-real time will be the tools for developing strategies in the future.

A *military strategy* is the architectural keystone in the understanding of war: “The art of using military force against an intelligent foe(s) towards attainment of policy objectives.” (Lonsdale, 2007, 239) A crucial prerequisite for framing a military strategy is that of developing the skill of strategic thinking. This process begins with studying the wisdom of famous strategists such as Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini. “This is the science (from the Latin *Scientia*), the corpus of knowledge handed down by the masters. The challenge for the strategists is to apply such science to the art of making strategy in the crucible of modern conflict—precisely where schools of higher military education must make their contribution.” (Marcella, 2010, 90) Learning lessons from the history of war is considered essential for educating future strategists. In this time of rapid change and great complexity, however, their findings cannot be trusted without question (Cf. Boston, 2003, 46 f.).

This book focuses on the holistic theory of the use of military means for purposes of state policy. However, the multidimensional and fundamental findings that Clausewitz noted about as a reasoning soldier must by no means be seen as referring exclusively to supreme commanders of the armed forces. As stated earlier, his work remains valid for all conflicts within society that are fought out between opponents who go to great lengths and accept high risks to prevail. It equally applies to processes in large business and social organisations in which individuals, groups or institutions rival with each other to achieve their own goals and assert their own



the rapid growth of its population, is not viable in the long term. It will become a preferential breeding ground for Islamist extremists.

Terrorist fighters avoid open battles and prefer a form of fighting in which they operate in confined areas and for limited periods of time. This severely impedes the effective use of superior military technology and sometimes even rules it out. Using this method of fighting, they confront the intervening powers over lengthy periods of time, mostly operating at a low level of intensity, but occasionally engaging in minor high-intensity battles. They have the initiative on their side, use the element of surprise and decide whether terrorist or conventional action is to be taken and become highly skilled and adaptable in the conduct of operations. The result is hybrid war a form of war in which conventional, irregular and terrorist acts of violence merge into one another (Cf. Hoffmann, 2009, 5 f.). Traditional forces of western States are neither prepared, organised nor trained to counter these threats effectively. Completely different is the situation in Russia, their military forces have drawn first consequences and train their forces accordingly in hybrid war scenarios.

Altogether, islamistic terrorism is a key cause of the change in strategy development and the necessity of new methods for it. Terrorism in its current form, however, is merely an expression of the considerable changes that have taken place in the forms of violence used. It plays a decisive part in the way the West perceives the threat and this book focusses on its extreme form. Traditional wars between pre-modern states continue to exist alongside this form of war, but their essence has been fathomed.

A common feature of wars is the use of force for a superior purpose. Can this fight against international Islamist terrorism be understood as a war? The English term *war* is commonly used for quite a broad spectrum of societal conflicts and includes, for example, the *war against terror*.

Mastering a hybrid war requires initiating a process that leads to the acquisition of knowledge on it. To this end, Clausewitz offers the following train of thoughts: He sees war as a chameleon that maintains its outer form, but constantly changes its characteristics. This meandering change in war is the starting point of his reflections. He succeeds in theory in approaching the dynamic transformation and events in war from a holistic angle, in defining its characteristics and in substantiating them by creating a context. The current terrorist threat lends his theory a whole new significance. It assists to answer the question as to what the essence of war is and what basic tendencies, characteristics and relations it comprises. Building on these phenomena, it is possible to use the terms denationalisation, asymmetric warfare and autonomisation to characterise future wars (Cf. Münkler, 2003, 10 f.).

The term *war* as used by Clausewitz describes a state that is initially characterised by a duel. At society level, the interactive process of imposing one's will on the opponent, who, in turn, wants to do just the same, is seen as interaction between two strategic wills in the context of the Fascinating Trinity. The theory of war is floating in a three-dimensional field of force of specific characteristics and tendencies. In irrational factors such as primordial hatred and violence and the non-rational factors of chance, probability and pure reason, Clausewitz sees a "systematic theory of war, full of intelligence and substance" (On War, 61) which goes far beyond the rational

nature of an instrument of policy and describes its inherent characteristics. In the Fascinating Trinity, he captures the essence of the instability that exists in war, which is of timeless validity. Strategic thinking and action will experience a renaissance if the objectively distinguishable characteristics of current wars and the interaction between them can be used as a basis for grasping and analysing these wars holistically and drawing conclusions about them.

Clausewitz conceives war as ranging from armed observation to battle between military units in distant provinces and large-scale wars aimed at achieving the utter defeat of the enemy. He distinguishes war from other conflicts as follows: “We therefore conclude that war does not belong in the realm of arts and sciences; rather it is part of man’s social existence. War is a clash between major interests, which is resolved by bloodshed—that is the only way in which it differs from other conflicts.” (On War, 149) What is unique about Clausewitz is that he reckons that the opponent will implicitly act rationally in *his rationality* and be an equal match in the dynamics of war.

It would seem pointless for a commander to try and defeat an overwhelmingly powerful enemy in an open battle in order to impose his will on him. This is the point at which Clausewitz brings in the *little war and people’s war*. It can force a superior opponent to abandon his intent if it is fought over a lengthy period of time. The concept of war as used by Clausewitz includes any level of intensity of trials of military strength conducted by two antagonists with the aim of achieving their objectives in the face of resistance under the most difficult conditions.

In the section entitled *The Maximum Use of Force*, Clausewitz warns against one side surrendering in an armed conflict for the purpose of limiting violence: “Kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed: war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst.” (On War, 75) Every decision a government makes to assert its interests by force using the instrument of war must be taken with great earnestness, care and a high measure of responsibility. A philanthropic war that is waged with one-sided good nature is a contradiction in terms and remains a grave error.

The term *war*, which lacks any subliminal moralising or legalising meaning, is seen here as a metaphysical term of analysis drawn from the field of political science. In this book, *war in the twenty-first century* is used as a generic term that encompasses the use of military force in low-intensity and protracted fighting against international Islamist terrorists, in guerrilla wars or in modern interstate conflicts in accordance with external security provision concepts. This use of force is tailored to political, military, social, economic, ethnic and international law objectives. War is seen as a form of conflict that includes cooperative and coercive measures taken between states or social groups. Morally speaking, it is despicable and evil. Nevertheless, wars also resolve political conflicts and lead to stability and peace (Cf. Luttwak, 1999, 36). According to the theory of the philosopher Kant, societies overcome war as a state of nature by means of contracts defining and protecting the rights and duties of the individual vis-à-vis the state. His idea was that war would

ultimately be eliminated by an all-ruling universal government. Though being far from it at present, it would be good if this idea were one day to become a reality.

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## Chapter 3

# The Belligerent Genesis of Europe



**Abstract** Souchon outlines the phenomenon of war and politics in the history of Clausewitz's Europe. He emphasizes the motives for and causes of war during this period and examines the role of historical field commanders and events. Souchon stresses the major theoretical works of Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini on how to conduct war and especially what theoretical and practical considerations have to be done to be successful. Souchon transfers these insights to the twenty-first century, where mass-army wars between countries fighting against a clearly identified enemy have been replaced by hybrid wars i.e. fighting against terrorist enemies. This calls for a holistic approach for commanders to be educated commanders in strategic thinking and the method of waging war.

### The Phenomenon of War and Politics

The thought of making war—a phenomenon of human history—an underlying subject of a study on security, seems to make sense only if it is viewed rationally and seen in a historical context. War is neither an autonomous phenomenon nor a natural event, but a means for enforcing societal power against resistance. This abstract view allows a subtle analysis of the different motives, decisions and courses of war to be conducted. Victory over an opposing army on the battlefield and the conquest of a country are two ways of deciding a war. Another is to create a situation in which the opponent realises that he can on no account achieve his purposes by the use of military force. After all, by being patient, making a show of strength and acting with ruse and cunning, it is possible for a belligerent to bring about decisions that allow him to achieve his objectives without a fight. For Sun Tzu (544–496 B.C.), an important requirement of war was to subjugate the opponent without rousing his resistance. To achieve it, he recommends countering the opponent's diplomacy by means of deception and ruse, disrupting alliances, improving one's own strategic situation by means of subversion and the aid of spies and agents, and identifying and thwarting the enemy's strategy at an early stage (Cf. Stahel, 2004, 13 ff.). Sun Tzu is fascinating on account of his systematic thinking, analytical acumen and original

ideas on the circumspective conduct of war (Cf. Sun Tzu, 2002, 60 ff.). Significant use was made of Sun Tzu's strategic ruse and deception by the USA in the opening days of the 2003 Iraq War.

Since early modern times, close ties between a country's army, government and goals have been essential for waging war successfully in the sense of achieving a purpose. In theory, the governments and army commands pursue common power-political objectives that include all the military, diplomatic, economic, domestic and humanitarian dimensions. The search for regularities and rules that govern success in politics is as old as history itself. In contrast, the tendencies and characteristics observed in wars are quite different and often develop with an unforeseeable dynamism so that the application of any regulations is almost out of the question. An important approach to the acquisition of knowledge is that of analysing and comparing events and processes in the history of war. The British strategist Liddell Hart is imputed to have said something to the tune of a commander who has never had time to study history is like a surgeon who has never studied anatomy (Cf. Collins, 1998, XXIII).

Learning about practical constraints, the dynamism of unforeseeable events and courses of action in past wars fosters familiarity with their inherent tendencies and characteristics. Sound judgement in complex situations demanding decisions to be made presupposes understanding and reason and the ability to think everything through to the end in a higher context.

Goethe distinguishes between the two in *Maxims and Reflections*. "Reason is dependent on what is coming into being, understanding depends on what is already there." (Beutler, 1948–1954, Volume 9, 571) The latter is made possible by theoretical knowledge that enables complex situations to be comprehended, gives them structures and reveals their essence. For Clausewitz, theory is more a method of viewing and not so much a dogmatic doctrine. He stresses the importance of a commander to have a strong temper and the need for him to study war in theory.

The ability to comprehend complexity and realise what is essential in the higher context builds on knowledge and experience. Taking the initiative against an equal opponent is a specific characteristic of wars. The relations between causes, courses of action and effects achieved depend directly not only on the opponent's conduct, but also on incalculable probability and chance in the way a conflict unfolds. This is why it is not enough to simply practice standardised procedures in order to be successful in war.

The use of military force is only wise if—as a necessary and sufficient condition—it serves to achieve a higher political purpose and is sealed in the sought peace agreement. Accordingly, high priority must be given to close interaction between the government and the army from the beginning of a war to its end. It is the mental and practical abilities of the commander and his emotional intelligence that decide over victory or defeat. He can only achieve the objectives set for him if the armed forces and means he needs are provided by the government.

The pursuit of military objectives without consideration of the political purpose and without adequate effort usually ends in disastrous defeat. Similarly, present-day wars as in Afghanistan reveal that armed forces are unable to achieve general

The spread of the Arabs in the Middle East and Central Asia, in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Northern Africa and in South-western Europe leads to the only large-scale invasion of Europe from a southerly direction, via the Strait of Gibraltar (711). The Arabs make it to Tours and Poitiers in Central France before they are defeated by a European army, led by Karl Martell (732). They stay on the Iberian Peninsula and in Southern France for 780 years and control the trade routes in the Mediterranean. When they withdraw from Europe (1492), they leave behind not only a unique intellectual heritage that includes the ancient monument in Granada, but also a wealth of knowledge in the fields of astrology, architecture, medicine and mathematics and a collection of works by Greek philosophers that would have been lost for mankind if they had not been translated into Arabic.

The great invasions by Alexander the Great, Attila and Genghis Khan are above all characterised by the pursuit of the strategic goals of extending power and engrossing wealth. The tasks of recruiting, equipping, training and supplying armies are assigned and managed on a centralised basis and implemented within a precise timeframe. When a campaign begins, a leader usually specifies the nearest war objectives and pursues them with far-sightedness, tactical skill, draconian harshness and autocratic command structures. “A strategist’s genius is in principle revealed where he brings about battles and wins them by means of tactical art.” (Delbrück, 1907, 340) Strategic planning follows an iterative process which builds on the outcomes of previous battles and, with a view to the troops, their supply and the financial basis, includes plans for further objectives. “Strategy, the use of battle for the purpose of war, existed, of course, but only seldom in the sense of an art.” (Delbrück, 1907, 333).

In connection with the Christian crusades to the Muslim region of the Levant and to Slav regions in the East (eleventh to fourteenth Century) and after numerous campaigns within Europe, individual powers gain strength. Following the discovery of America (1492), the subsequent onset of the colonisation of large parts of the world and the resulting acquisition of wealth, the European continent becomes the all-dominating center of power in the world.

The discovery of America marks the point at which people start to turn from the next world to this world and humanism marks a change in the attitude to life, from a *Viator mundi* (pilgrim to the heavenly home) to a *Faber mundi* (creator and ruler of the world). Progress in the discovery of the world and people manifests itself in particular in art. Bramante, Raphael and Michelangelo work in architecture. Botticelli, da Vinci and Titian produce works of unmatched beauty in painting. Europe begins to establish its rule over the world in the Renaissance period. Its rise is the result of Aristotelian curiosity, paired with audacity and a firm aspiration for power (Cf. Höffe, 2001, 173 ff.). In philosophy, scholars start to abandon Aristotelian thinking of pre-Christian scholasticism and turn instead to Neo-Platonism. Machiavelli (1469–1527) is one of the first theorists in political science to think in military categories. He recognises the evolutionary changes that have occurred in politics and the social domains during the Renaissance and their dependence on the fundamental revolution in weapons technology and military tactics. The invention of gunpowder, muskets and cannons ends the supremacy of armoured knight armies. The court

culture of knights disappears and with it the medieval forms of society. Knight armies are ousted by mercenary armies. Clausewitz characterises this transformation with the following words:

“Regulated and coordinated military action did not really become possible until states replaced feudal levies with mercenary troops. Feudal obligations were transformed into money payments, and liege service either vanished altogether in favour of recruitment, or fell only on the lower classes. The nobility considered the furnishing of recruits as a kind of tribute, a human tax . . . At any rate, as we have stated elsewhere, armies now became instruments of the central government, and their cost was borne mainly by the treasury or public revenue.” (On War, 330).

The beginning of the early modern period is dominated by mercenary armies that need to be trained, equipped, paid, supplied and accommodated. A wide variety of organisational elements come into being in the armies for establishing operational bases and lines of communication and for discharging duties in the fields of subsistence, logistics and administration (Cf. Delbrück, 1907, 323 ff.). King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden (1594–1632) is considered a holistic strategic thinker, a remarkable monarch, a commander, a military organiser and a theoretician. By maintaining an expertly trained and well-paid professional army, by establishing army depots and by improving fortress construction, he secures Sweden’s hegemony in Northern Europe until well into the eighteenth century. Musketeers replace pikemen and are organised as infantrymen in companies, battalions, regiments and brigades (Cf. Rothenburg, 1986, 49 ff.). Gustav II Adolf establishes a military hierarchy by introducing standardised uniforms and rank insignia, improves cohesion and fighting morale among the troops, whose nucleus is in the small units, and promotes his officers and non-commissioned officers primarily on the basis of merit. Sweden’s successful campaigns are clouded in the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) however, by the premature death of Gustav II Adolf at the Battle of Lützen (1632). With his ability to comprehend war and his decision to gear the organisation and training of his army to purpose, the Swedish king is a pioneer for subsequent commanders and strategic thinkers (Cf. Stahel, 2004, 74 ff.).

Thoughts on organisation, drill regulations, the conduct of war and the shaping of an order after victory or defeat in a war are developed by John Maurice of Nassau (1604–1679), a Dutch field marshal nicknamed “the Brazilian”. He combines the war of conquest in Brazil with the establishment of a civilian administration in the colonies (Cf. Stahel, 2004, 73 f.).

The Thirty Years’ War is decisive for the nation building process in Germany, France and England. For Germany, it is a disaster with far-reaching consequences. On the face of it, Catholics are fighting against Protestants over questions of Christian faith. The truth, however, is that the Emperor is wrestling with the princes for supremacy in Central Europe. The peace treaties of Münster and Osnabrück result on the one hand in the sustained fragmentation of the power structures in Germany, which continues until the foundation of the German Empire in 1871, and on the other in the nationalisation of war under international law (Cf. Münkler, 2002, 200). The strengthening of the positions of the princes diminishes the influence of

the empire, the unification of Germany is delayed for centuries and Central Europe is characterised by a proliferation of small states.

A look at the history of *England* reveals that there is a dramatic shift in the balance of power in the country at a very early stage and that it has great repercussions. In 1660, Parliament passes the *Bill of Rights*, allowing the free election of Parliament, free speech and fiscal sovereignty, all of which replace a court structure of monarchy and the vague decision-making rules that have evolved over history. The English kingdom is subject to the sovereignty of Parliament. In the era of the Enlightenment, modernisation and revolutions, the English concept of a constitution becomes the foundation for the French Revolution. This is followed by England's implementation of an expansive colonial policy that is funded by the profitable trade with slaves, spices and finished products. The country's rise to become a global sea power in the eighteenth century is favoured by it being on an island that is unassailable by the continental powers, having a superior navy and a global base system. Trade and naval supremacy pave the way for England to become a world power.

Goethe concludes this about English behaviour. "The clever Englishman sees himself surrounded from youth by a significant world that inspires all his powers; he realises sooner or later that he must collect all his wits to come to terms with it." (Goethe's Works, 1873, Volume 19, 118).

Naval wars have also been fights for trade routes since time immemorial. To deny an opponent control of the sea transport routes, fleets often operate far from home waters and for extended periods of time (Cf. Ruge, 1955, 19 ff.). The focus of preparations for war is on the construction of war fleets, the recruitment and drilling of crews and the equipment of ships. A fleet commander sometimes sails for months and years on behalf of the monarch to fight an opposing fleet. Important decisions are taken in the course of operations and are frequently of a tactical nature. Naval warfare is an important political instrument, but it cannot be regulated and controlled like land war.

In *France*, King Louis XIV rules from 1643 to 1715. His support for business and culture, his expansive and belligerent foreign policy and his pomposity mark a peak in France's endeavour to gain power in Europe under the banner of court absolutism. Due to the import of raw materials, export of finished products and establishment of trading and manufacturing companies, he succeeds in achieving a high level of economic prosperity. His Minister of War, François Louvois, reorganises the military, introduces self-subsistence and prescribes strict discipline. With a powerful army and an ocean-going fleet, Louis XIV is able to expand the French colonial empire in Canada, America, Africa and India. Finally, he introduces a system of extensive patronage for the fine arts. The reign of Louis XIV reveals a cycle that ranges from economic prosperity, expansionism, military conquests, wealth and cultural prosperity to an overuse of resources and a loss of power.

European powers begin to launch invasions on the Eurasian heartland in the eighteenth century. King Charles XII of Sweden leads a vastly superior army southwards through Poland and Ukraine. Decimated in numerous battles, his army is finally destroyed at the Battle of Poltava (1709). He himself is able to flee with the