

How and why did changes in warfare affect diplomacy, the European state system, and the balance of power?

AP European History Lesson Plan

Seven “Cs” Analysis

STATES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF POWER



“Clausewitz wants us to accept the practical reality that these dynamic forces are ever-present and constantly interacting in the everyday world...”

Ellen Resnek
Downingtown East High School
FPRI Conference
Why Does America Go To War?

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

- Evaluate how the emergence of new weapons, tactics, and methods of military organization changed the scale and cost of warfare, required the centralization of power, and shifted the balance of power.
- Analyze the role of warfare in remaking the political map of Europe and in shifting the global balance of power in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Assess the impact of war, diplomacy, and overseas exploration and colonization on European diplomacy and balance of power until 1789.
- Explain how the French Revolution and the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars shifted the European balance of power and encouraged the creation of a new diplomatic framework.
- Explain the role of nationalism in altering the European balance of power, and explain attempts made to limit nationalism as a means to ensure continental stability.
- Evaluate how overseas competition and changes in the alliance system upset the Concert of Europe and set the stage for World War I.
- Explain the ways in which the Common Market and collapse of the Soviet Empire changed the political balance of power, the status of the nation- state, and global political alliances.

NCSS Standard VI. Power, Authority, and Governance.

Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world is essential for developing civic competence.

Essential Question

How and why did changes in warfare affect diplomacy, the European state system, and the balance of power?

Instructional Focus

Analysis of Clausewitz and Synthesis of AP Euro Wars

Teacher Background

*This lesson plan was conceived and adapted from the lecture "Thinking About War:"
Dr. Kori Schake : FPRI Research Fellow*

‘Only 8% of human history is one where humans have not been engaged in War’

War, wrote the famed nineteenth-century military strategist Carl von Clausewitz, should not be compared to art, but rather to commerce, “which is also a conflict of human interests and activities.”

“It would be an immense service to teach the Art of War entirely by historical examples, as Feuquieres proposed to do; but it would be full work for the whole life of a man, if we reflect that he who undertakes it must first qualify himself for the task by a long personal experience in actual War. Whoever, stirred by ambition, undertakes such a task, let him prepare himself for his pious undertaking as for a long pilgrimage; let him give up his time, spare no sacrifice, fear no temporal rank or power, and rise above all feelings of personal vanity, of false shame, in order, according to the French code, to speak *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*”

The Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz is widely acknowledged as the most important of the classical strategic thinkers. Even though he's been dead for nearly two centuries, he remains a powerful living influence: the most frequently cited, the most controversial, and in many respects the most modern of strategic theorists. Clausewitz is a professional soldier, trying to come to terms with war as he's seen it, up close and personal, in victory and defeat (in this sense, he is writing primarily for himself). He does not represent the aggressive Germany of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: He represents an alliance of independent states attempting to avoid subjugation by an alien conqueror and ideology (i.e., Napoleon and the ideology of the French Revolution). He is a scholar/teacher, seeking to "educate the mind" of future warriors and statesmen as to the enduring nature and evolving conduct of war. (In this sense, he is writing for posterity, primarily for his fellow officers). From age 13 (when he served as a cadet in an infantry regiment engaged in an active and bloody counterinsurgency campaign) until his untimely death in 1831, Clausewitz was intimately involved in momentous wars and political developments that literally transformed the map of Europe. His thinking was not speculative theorizing and a search for linear, prescriptive principles. Rather, he made a deliberate effort to come to grips with the multi-dimensional phenomenon of war in response to what he saw as a pressing need for a better understanding of that phenomenon.

Theme Overview

After 1450, the old ideal that Europe constituted a unified Christendom was weakened by the rise of sovereign states. These states asserted a monopoly over law and the management of all institutions, including the church. The growth of secular power played a critical role in the success of the Protestant Reformation, and states gained increasing influence over religious affairs. The military revolution of the early modern period forced states to find new and better sources of revenue, and it spurred the expansion of state control over political and economic functions. In the long view, war became increasingly costly, technologically sophisticated, and deadly. As Europeans expanded overseas, the theaters of European warfare expanded as well.

European polities took a variety of forms — empires, nation-states, and small republics. Absolute monarchies concentrated all authority in a single person who was regarded as divinely ordained, whereas in constitutional governments, power was shared between the monarch and representative institutions. Early modern advances in education, publishing, and prosperity created public opinion and civil society independent of government — developments that supported and were promoted by Enlightenment theories of natural rights and the social contract. Political revolutions and industrialization shifted governance from monarchies and aristocracies to parliamentary institutions that both generated and embodied the rule of law while gradually widening the participation of citizens in governance through the extension of suffrage. In the late 19th century, as European states became increasingly responsive to public opinion and developed mass political parties, they ironically became impersonal and bureaucratic. After World War I, under the pressure of political and economic crises, totalitarian regimes threatened parliamentary governments.

The European state system, originating in the Peace of Westphalia and structuring interstate relations through World War I, assumed that the continent would be divided into independent sovereign states and that war and diplomacy would be the normal means of interstate relations. In the 19th century, the goal of establishing and maintaining a balance of power was challenged by the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the emergence of Italy and Germany as states, the weakening of traditional empires, and shifts in the alliance system. New and hardened alliances between countries driven by overseas competition and the growing influence of nationalism undermined diplomatic efforts to stave off war in the first half of the 20th century. In the 20th century, new international organizations (the League of Nations, the United Nations, NGOs) attempted to develop international law and modes of dispute resolution that would promote peace. After the catastrophe of two world wars, European states returned to the goal of a unified Europe, embodied this time not in Christendom but in the secular institutions of the European Union.

*Language is provided by the College Board.

Procedure

1. Hook: Excerpt from film *Crimson Tide* (1995).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4Yw3qU58w4&feature=youtu.be>

The content is the theoretical argument scene between Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington. Direct your students to watch it closely. Clausewitz does not argue that the commander who ignores the political issues is the one most likely to win, but he does make an argument in very similar language that the opponent who considers his objectives to be worth a higher price has an advantage.

2. Whole class direct instruction:

Discuss the three fundamental concepts from *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz: Book One, Chapter One:

- (1) "War is . . . an act of force [or threat of force] to compel our enemy to do our will;"
- (2) "War is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means;"
- (3) "As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a remarkable trinity - composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason."

3. Class discussion of political objectives and military aims.

Use these three fundamental concepts as the organizing approach to discuss the nature and purpose of war by dividing the class into small groups with the task of explaining what Clausewitz "really meant," provide historical examples.

Work through the reading selections in the order read and ask the students to identify, explain, and evaluate the development of Clausewitz's ideas and how his thinking may have changed as he wrote. Utilizing the Student Analysis section in each part of the reading.

4. Assessment:

At the end, have the students draw Clausewitz's ideas together into a systematic, coherent body of thought and analyze their relevance and implications for the Major Wars we have studied this year in AP European History.

I have included a chart for reference. Use the 7 Cs as an Analytical Tool
Conflict Causes Course Consequences Conquerors Conquered Clausewitz

Extension/Modification

Teachers can modify the instruction to include a PPT presentation on Von Clausewitz and his general strategy that war has 3 objectives.

- To conquer and destroy the armed power of the enemy.
- To take possession of his material and other sources of strength.
- To gain public opinion.

Teachers can additionally modify the lesson by modeling an analysis of one of the wars from the 7 Cs Chart.

Student Hand Out
On War
Carl von Clausewitz

BOOK I ON THE NATURE OF WAR
BOOK I CHAPTER I

What is War?

1. Introduction.

WE propose to consider first the single elements of our subject, then each branch or part, and, last of all, the whole, in all its relations—therefore to advance from the simple to the complex. But it is necessary for us to commence with a glance at the nature of the whole, because it is particularly necessary that in the consideration of any of the parts the whole should be kept constantly in view.

2. Definition.

We shall not enter into any of the abstruse definitions of war used by publicists. We shall keep to the element of the thing itself, to a duel. War is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale. 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.

War therefore is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.

Violence arms itself with the inventions of Art and Science in order to contend against violence. Self-imposed restrictions, almost imperceptible and hardly worth mentioning, termed usages of International Law, accompany it without essentially impairing its power. Violence, that is to say physical force (for there is no moral force without the conception of states and law), is therefore the means; the compulsory submission of the enemy to our will is the ultimate object. In order to attain this object fully, the enemy must be disarmed; and this is, correctly speaking, the real aim of hostilities in theory. It takes the place of the final object, and puts it aside in a manner as something not properly belonging to war.

Student Analysis:

3. Utmost use of force.

Now, philanthropists may easily imagine there is a skilful method of disarming and overcoming an enemy without causing great bloodshed, and that this is the proper tendency of the art of War. However plausible this may appear, still it is an error which must be extirpated; for in such dangerous things as war, the errors which proceed from a spirit of benevolence are just the worst. As the use of physical power to the utmost extent by no means excludes the co-operation of the intelligence, it follows that he who uses force unsparingly, without reference to the quantity of bloodshed, must obtain a superiority if his adversary does not act likewise. By such means the former dictates the law to the latter, and both proceed to extremities, to which the only limitations are those imposed by the amount of counteracting force on each side.

This is the way in which the matter must be viewed; and it is to no purpose, and even acting against one's own interest, to turn away from the consideration of the real nature of the affair, because the coarseness of its elements excites repugnance.

If the wars of civilised people are less cruel and destructive than those of savages, the difference arises from the social condition both of states in themselves and in their relations to each other. Out of this social condition and its relations war arises, and by it war is subjected to conditions, is controlled and modified. But these things do not belong to war itself; they are only given conditions; and to introduce into the philosophy of war itself a principle of moderation would be an absurdity.

The fight between men consists really of two different elements, the hostile feeling and the hostile view. In our definition of war, we have chosen as its characteristic the latter of these elements, because it is the most general. It is impossible to conceive the passion of hatred of the wildest description, bordering on mere instinct, without combining with it the idea of a hostile intention. On the other hand, hostile intentions may often exist without being accompanied by any, or at all events, by any extreme hostility of feeling. Amongst savages views emanating from the feelings, amongst civilised nations those emanating from the understanding, have the predominance; but this difference is not inherent in a state of barbarism, and in a state of culture in themselves it arises from attendant circumstances, existing institutions, etc., and therefore is not to be found necessarily in all cases, although it prevails in the majority. In short, even the most civilised nations may burn with passionate hatred of each other.

We may see from this what a fallacy it would be to refer the war of a civilised nation entirely to an intelligent act on the part of the Government, and to imagine it as continually freeing itself more and more from all feeling of passion in such a way that at last the physical masses of combatants would no longer be required; in reality, their mere relations would suffice—a kind of algebraic action.

Theory was beginning to drift in this direction until the facts of the last war taught it better. If war is an act of force, it belongs necessarily also to the feelings. If it does not originate in the feelings, it re-acts more or less upon them, and this more or less depends not on the degree of civilisation, but upon the importance and duration of the interests involved.

Therefore, if we find civilised nations do not put their prisoners to death, do not devastate towns and countries, this is because their intelligence exercises greater influence on their mode of carrying on war, and has taught them more effectual means of applying force than these rude acts of mere instinct. The invention of gunpowder, the constant progress of improvements in the construction of firearms are sufficient proofs that the tendency to destroy the adversary which lies at the bottom of the conception of war, is in no way changed or modified through the progress of civilisation.

We therefore repeat our proposition, that war is an act of violence, which in its application knows no bounds; as one dictates the law to the other, there arises a sort of reciprocal action, which in the conception, must lead to an extreme. This is the first reciprocal action, and the first extreme with which we meet (first reciprocal action).

Student Analysis:

4.—The aim is to disarm the enemy.

We have already said that the aim of the action in war is to disarm the enemy, and we shall now show that this in theoretical conception at least is necessary.

If our opponent is to be made to comply with our will, we must place him in a situation which is more oppressive to him than the sacrifice which we demand; but the disadvantages of this position must naturally not be of a transitory nature, at least in appearance, otherwise the enemy, instead of yielding, will hold out, in the prospect of a change for the better. Every change in this position which is produced by a continuation of the war, should therefore be a change for the worse, at least, in idea. The worst position in which a belligerent can be placed is that of being completely disarmed. If, therefore, the enemy is to be reduced to submission by an act of war, he must either be positively disarmed or placed in such a position that he is threatened with it according to probability. From this it follows that the disarming or overthrow of the enemy, whichever we call it, must always be the aim of warfare. Now war is always the shock of two hostile bodies in collision, not the action of a living power upon an inanimate mass, because an absolute state of endurance would not be making war; therefore what we have just said as to the aim of action in war applies to both parties. Here then is another case of reciprocal action. As long as the enemy is not defeated, I have to apprehend that he may defeat me, then I shall be no longer my own master, but he will dictate the law to me as I did to him. This is the second reciprocal action and leads to a second extreme (second reciprocal action).

Student Analysis:

5.—Utmost exertion of powers.

If we desire to defeat the enemy, we must proportion our efforts to his powers of resistance. This is expressed by the product of two factors which cannot be separated, namely, the sum of available means and the strength of the will. The sum of the available means may be estimated in a measure, as it depends (although not entirely) upon numbers; but the strength of volition, is more difficult to determine, and can only be estimated to a certain extent by the strength of the motives. Granted we have obtained in this way an approximation to the strength of the power to be contended with, we can then take a review of our own means, and either increase them so as to obtain a preponderance, or in case we have not the resources to effect this, then do our best by increasing our means as far as possible. But the adversary does the same; therefore there is a new mutual enhancement, which in pure conception, must create a fresh effort towards an extreme. This is the third case of reciprocal action, and a third extreme with which we meet (third reciprocal action).

Student Analysis:

6.—Modification in the reality.

Thus reasoning in the abstract, the mind cannot stop short of an extreme, because it has to deal with an extreme, with a conflict of forces left to themselves, and obeying no other but their own inner laws. If we should seek to deduce from the pure conception of war an absolute point for the aim which we shall propose and for the means which we shall apply, this constant reciprocal action would involve us in extremes, which would be nothing but a play of ideas produced by an almost invisible train of logical subtleties. If adhering closely to the absolute, we try to avoid all difficulties by a stroke of the pen, and insist with logical strictness that in every case the extreme must be the object, and the utmost effort must be exerted in that direction, such a stroke of the pen would be a mere paper law, not by any means adapted to the real world.

Even supposing this extreme tension of forces was an absolute which could easily be ascertained, still we must admit that the human mind would hardly submit itself to this kind of logical chimera. There would be in many cases an unnecessary waste of power, which would be in opposition to other principles of statecraft; an effort of will would be required disproportioned to the proposed object, and which therefore it would be impossible to realise, for the human will does not derive its impulse from logical subtleties.

But everything takes a different form when we pass from abstractions to reality. In the former everything must be subject to optimism, and we must imagine the one side as well as the other, striving after perfection and even attaining it. Will this ever take place in reality? It will if

- 1, War becomes a completely isolated act, which arises suddenly and is in no way connected with the previous history of the states;
- 2, If it is limited to a single solution, or to several simultaneous solutions;
- 3, If it contains within itself the solution perfect and complete, free from any reaction upon it, through a calculation beforehand of the political situation which will follow from it.

Student Analysis:

7.—War is never an isolated act.

With regard to the first point, neither of the two opponents is an abstract person to the other, not even as regards that factor in the sum of resistance, which does not depend on objective things, viz., the will. This will is not an entirely unknown quantity; it indicates what it will be to-morrow by what it is to-day. War does not spring up quite suddenly, it does not spread to the full in a moment; each of the two opponents can, therefore, form an opinion of the other, in a great measure, from what he is and what he does; instead of judging of him according to what he, strictly speaking, should be or should do. But, now, man with his incomplete organisation is always below the line of absolute perfection, and thus these deficiencies, having an influence on both sides, become a modifying principle.

Student Analysis:

8.—It does not consist of a single instantaneous blow.

The second point gives rise to the following considerations:—

If war ended in a single solution, or a number of simultaneous ones, then naturally all the preparations for the same would have a tendency to the extreme, for an omission could not in any way be repaired; the utmost, then, that the world of reality could furnish as a guide for us would be the preparations of the enemy, as far as they are known to us; all the rest would fall into the domain of the abstract. But if the result is made up from several successive acts, then naturally that which precedes with all its phases may be taken as a measure for that which will follow, and in this manner the world of reality here again takes the place of the abstract, and thus modifies the effort towards the extreme.

Yet every war would necessarily resolve itself into a single solution, or a sum of simultaneous results, if all the means required for the struggle were raised at once, or could be at once raised; for as one adverse result necessarily diminishes the means, then if all the means have been applied in the first, a second cannot properly be supposed. All hostile acts which might follow would belong essentially to the first, and form in reality only its duration.

But we have already seen that even in the preparation for war the real world steps into the place of mere abstract conception—a material standard into the place of the hypotheses of an extreme: that therefore in that way both parties, by the influence of the mutual reaction, remain below the line of extreme effort, and therefore all forces are not at once brought forward.

It lies also in the nature of these forces and their application, that they cannot all be brought into activity at the same time. These forces are the armies actually on foot, the country, with its superficial extent and its population, and the allies.

In point of fact the country, with its superficial area and the population, besides being the source of all military force, constitutes in itself an integral part of the efficient quantities in war, providing either the theatre of war or exercising a considerable influence on the same.

Now it is possible to bring all the moveable military forces of a country into operation at once, but not all fortresses, rivers, mountains, people, etc., in short not the whole country, unless it is so small that it may be completely embraced by the first act of the war. Further, the co-operation of allies does not depend on the will of the belligerents; and from the nature of the political relations of states to each other, this co-operation is frequently not afforded until after the war has commenced, or it may be increased to restore the balance of power.

That this part of the means of resistance, which cannot at once be brought into activity, in many cases is a much greater part of the whole than might at first be supposed, and that it often restores the balance of power, seriously affected by the great force of the first decision, will be more fully shown hereafter. Here it is sufficient to show that a complete concentration of all available means in a moment of time, is contradictory to the nature of war.

Now this, in itself, furnishes no ground for relaxing our efforts to accumulate strength to gain the first result, because an unfavourable issue is always a disadvantage to which no one would purposely expose himself, and also because the first decision, although not the only one, still will have the more influence on subsequent events, the greater it is itself.

But the possibility of gaining a later result causes men to take refuge in that expectation owing to the repugnance, in the human mind, to making excessive efforts; and therefore forces are not concentrated and measures are not taken for the first decision with that energy which would otherwise be used. Whatever one belligerent omits from weakness, becomes to the other a real objective ground for limiting his own efforts, and thus again, through this reciprocal action, extreme tendencies are brought down to efforts on a limited scale.

Student Analysis:

9.—The result in war is never absolute.

Lastly, even the final decision of a whole war is not always to be regarded as absolute. The conquered state often sees in it only a passing evil, which may be repaired in after times by means of political combinations. How much this also must modify the degree of tension and the vigour of the efforts made is evident in itself.

Student Analysis:

10.—The probabilities of real life take the place of the conceptions of the extreme and the absolute.

In this manner the whole act of war is removed from under the rigorous law of forces exerted to the utmost. If the extreme is no longer to be apprehended, and no longer to be sought for, it is left to the judgment to determine the limits for the efforts to be made in place of it; and this can only be done on the data furnished by the facts of the real world by the laws of probability. Once the belligerents are no longer mere conceptions but individual states and governments, once the war is no longer an ideal, but a definite substantial procedure, then the reality will furnish the data to compute the unknown quantities which are required to be found.

From the character, the measures, the situation of the adversary, and the relations with which he is surrounded, each side will draw conclusions by the law of probability as to the designs of the other, and act accordingly.

Student Analysis:

11.—The political object now reappears.

Here, now, forces itself again into consideration a question which we had laid aside (see No. 2), that is, the political object of the war. The law of the extreme, the view to disarm the adversary, to overthrow him, has hitherto to a certain extent usurped the place of this end or object. Just as this law loses its force, the political object must again come forward. If the whole consideration is a calculation of probability based on definite persons and relations, then the political object, being the original motive, must be an essential factor in the product. The smaller the sacrifice we demand from our opponent, the smaller it may be expected will be the means of resistance which he will employ; but the smaller his are, the smaller will ours require to be. Further, the smaller our political object, the less value shall we set upon it, and the more easily shall we be induced to give it up altogether.

Thus, therefore, the political object, as the original motive of the war, will be the standard for determining both the aim of the military force, and also the amount of effort to be made. This it cannot be in itself; but it is so in relation to both the belligerent states, because we are concerned with realities, not with mere abstractions. One and the same political object may produce totally different effects upon different people, or even upon the same people at different times; we can, therefore, only admit the political object as the measure, by considering it in its effects upon those masses which it is to move, and consequently the nature of those masses also comes into consideration. It is easy to see that thus the result may be very different according as these masses are animated with a spirit which will infuse vigour into the action or otherwise. It is quite possible for such a state of feeling to exist between two states that a very trifling political motive for war may produce an effect quite disproportionate, in fact, a perfect explosion.

This applies to the efforts which the political object will call forth in the two states, and to the aim which the military action shall prescribe for itself. At times it may itself be that aim, as for example the conquest of a province. At other times, the political object itself is not suitable for the aim of military action; then such a one must be chosen as will be an equivalent for it, and stand in its place as regards the conclusion of peace. But, also, in this, due attention to the peculiar character of the states concerned is always supposed. There are circumstances in which the equivalent must be much greater than the political object in order to secure the latter. The political object will be so much the more the standard of aim and effort, and have more influence in itself, the more the masses are indifferent, the less that any mutual feeling of hostility prevails in the two states from other causes, and, therefore, there are cases where the political object almost alone will be decisive.

If the aim of the military action is an equivalent for the political object, that action will in general diminish as the political object diminishes, and that in a greater degree the more the political object dominates; and so is explained how, without any contradiction in itself, there may be wars of all degrees of importance and energy, from a war of extermination, down to the mere use of an army of observation. This, however, leads to a question of another kind which we have hereafter to develop and answer.

Student Analysis:

12.— A suspension in the action of war unexplained by anything said as yet.

However insignificant the political claims mutually advanced, however weak the means put forth, however small the aim to which military action is directed, can this action be suspended even for a moment? This is a question which penetrates deeply into the nature of the subject.

Every transaction requires for its accomplishment a certain time which we call its duration. This may be longer or shorter, according as the person acting throws more or less despatch into his movements.

About this more or less we shall not trouble ourselves here. Each person acts in his own fashion; but the slow person does not protract the thing because he wishes to spend more time about it, but because, by his nature, he requires more time, and if he made more haste, would not do the thing so well. This time, therefore, depends on subjective causes, and belongs to the length, so-called, of the action.

If we allow now to every action in war this, its length, then we must assume, at first sight at least, that any expenditure of time beyond this length, that is, every suspension of hostile action appears an absurdity; with respect to this it must not be forgotten that we now speak not of the progress of one or other of the two opponents, but of the general progress of the whole action of the war.

Student Analysis:

13.—There is only one cause which can suspend the action, and this seems to be only possible on one side in any case.

If two parties have armed themselves for strife, then a feeling of animosity must have moved them to it; as long now as they continue armed, that is do not come to terms of peace, this feeling must exist; and it can only be brought to a standstill by either side by one single motive alone, which is, that he waits for a more favourable moment for action. Now at first sight it appears that this motive can never exist except on one side, because it, eo ipso, must be prejudicial to the other. If the one has an interest in acting, then the other must have an interest in waiting.

A complete equilibrium of forces can never produce a suspension of action, for during this suspension he who has the positive object (that is the assailant) must continue progressing; for if we should imagine an equilibrium in this way, that he who has the positive object, therefore the strongest motive, can at the same time only command the lesser means, so that the equation is made up by the product of the motive and the power, then we must say, if no alteration in this condition of equilibrium is to be expected, the two parties must make peace; but if an alteration is to be expected, then it can only be favourable to one side, and therefore the other has a manifest interest to act without delay. We see that the conception of an equilibrium cannot explain a suspension of arms, but that it ends in the question of the expectation of a more favourable moment.

Let us suppose, therefore, that one of two states has a positive object, as, for instance, the conquest of one of the enemy's provinces—which is to be utilised in the settlement of peace. After this conquest his political object is accomplished, the necessity for action ceases, and for him a pause ensues. If the adversary is also contented with this solution he will make peace, if not he must act. Now, if we suppose that in four weeks he will be in a better condition to act, then he has sufficient grounds for putting off the time of action.

But from that moment the logical course for the enemy appears to be to act that he may not give the conquered party the desired time. Of course, in this mode of reasoning a complete insight into the state of circumstances on both sides, is supposed.

Student Analysis:

14.—Thus a continuance of action will ensue which will advance towards a climax.

If this unbroken continuity of hostile operations really existed, the effect would be that everything would again be driven towards the extreme; for irrespective of the effect of such incessant activity in inflaming the feelings and infusing into the whole a greater degree of passion, a greater elementary force, there would also follow from this continuance of action, a stricter continuity, a closer connection between cause and effect, and thus every single action would become of more importance, and consequently more replete with danger.

But we know that the course of action in war has seldom or never this unbroken continuity, and that there have been many wars in which action occupied by far the smallest portion of time employed, the whole of the rest being consumed in inaction. It is impossible that this should be always an anomaly, and suspension of action in war must be possible, that is no contradiction in itself. We now proceed to show this, and how it is.

Student Analysis:

15.—Here, therefore, the principle of polarity is brought into requisition.

As we have supposed the interests of one commander to be always antagonistic to those of the other, we have assumed a true polarity. We reserve a fuller explanation of this for another chapter, merely making the following observation on it at present.

The principle of polarity is only valid when it can be conceived in one and the same thing, where the positive and its opposite the negative, completely destroy each other. In a battle both sides strive to conquer; that is true polarity, for the victory of the one side destroys that of the other. But when we speak of two different things, which have a common relation external to themselves, then it is not the things but their relations which have the polarity.

Student Analysis:

16.—Attack and defence are things differing in kind and of unequal force. Polarity is, therefore, not applicable to them.

If there was only one form of war, to wit the attack of the enemy, therefore no defence; or in other words, if the attack was distinguished from the defence merely by the positive motive, which the one has and the other has not, but the fight precisely one and the same: then in this sort of fight every advantage gained on the one side would be a corresponding disadvantage on the other, and true polarity would exist.

But action in war is divided into two forms, attack and defence, which, as we shall hereafter explain more particularly, are very different and of unequal strength. Polarity, therefore, lies in that to which both bear a relation, in the decision, but not in the attack or defence itself.

If the one commander wishes the solution put off, the other must wish to hasten it; but certainly only in the same form of combat. If it is A's interest not to attack his enemy at present but four weeks hence, then it is B's interest to be attacked, not four weeks hence, but at the present moment. This is the direct antagonism of interests, but it by no means follows that it would be for B's interest to attack A at once. That is plainly something totally different.

Student Analysis:

17.—The effect of Polarity is often destroyed by the superiority of the Defence over the Attack, and thus the suspension of action in war is explained.

If the form of defence is stronger than that of offence, as we shall hereafter show, the question arises, Is the advantage of a deferred decision as great on the one side as the advantage of the defensive form on the other? If it is not, then it cannot by its counter-weight overbalance the latter, and thus influence the progress of the action of the war. We see, therefore, that the impulsive force existing in the polarity of interests may be lost in the difference between the strength of the offensive and defensive, and thereby become ineffectual.

If, therefore, that side for which the present is favourable is too weak to be able to dispense with the advantage of the defensive, he must put up with the unfavourable prospects which the future holds out; for it may still be better to fight a defensive battle in the unpromising future than to assume the offensive or make peace at present. Now, being convinced that the superiority of the defensive (rightly understood) is very great, and much greater than may appear at first sight, we conceive that the greater number of those periods of inaction which occur in war are thus explained without involving any contradiction. The weaker the motives to action are, the more will those motives be absorbed and neutralised by this difference between attack and defence, the more frequently, therefore, will action in warfare be stopped, as indeed experience teaches.

Student Analysis:

18.—A second ground consists in the imperfect knowledge of circumstances.

But there is still another cause which may stop action in war, that is an incomplete view of the situation. Each commander can only fully know his own position; that of his opponent can only be known to him by reports, which are uncertain; he may, therefore, form a wrong judgment with respect to it upon data of this description, and, in consequence of that error, he may suppose that the initiative is properly with his adversary when it is really with himself. This want of perfect insight might certainly just as often occasion an untimely action as untimely inaction, and so it would in itself no more contribute to delay than to accelerate action in war. Still, it must always be regarded as one of the natural causes which may bring action in war to a standstill without involving a contradiction. But if we reflect how much more we are inclined and induced to estimate the power of our opponents too high than too low, because it lies in human nature to do so, we shall admit that our imperfect insight into facts in general must contribute very much to stop action in war, and to modify the principle of action.

The possibility of a standstill brings into the action of war a new modification, inasmuch as it dilutes that action with the element of Time, checks the influence or sense of danger in its course, and increases the means of reinstating a lost balance of force. The greater the tension of feelings from which the war springs, the greater, therefore, the energy with which it is carried on, so much the shorter will be the periods of inaction; on the other hand, the weaker the principle of warlike activity, the longer will be these periods: for powerful motives increase the force of the will, and this, as we know, is always a factor in the product of force.

Student Analysis:

19.—Frequent periods of inaction in war remove it further from the absolute, and make it still more a calculation of probabilities.

But the slower the action proceeds in war, the more frequent and longer the periods of inaction, so much the more easily can an error be repaired; therefore so much the bolder a general will be in his calculations, so much the more readily will he keep them below the line of absolute, and build everything upon probabilities and conjecture. Thus, according as the course of the war is more or less slow, more or less time will be allowed for that which the nature of a concrete case particularly requires, calculation of probability based on given circumstances.

Student Analysis:

20.—It therefore now only wants the element of chance to make of it a game, and in that element it is least of all deficient.

We see from the foregoing how much the objective nature of war makes it a calculation of probabilities; now there is only one single element still wanting to make it a game, and that element it certainly is not without: it is chance. There is no human affair which stands so constantly and so generally in close connection with chance as war. But along with chance, the accidental, and along with it good luck, occupy a great place in war.

Student Analysis:

21.—As war is a game through its objective nature, so also is it through its subjective.

If we now take a look at the subjective nature of war, that is at those powers with which it is carried on, it will appear to us still more like a game. The element in which the operations of war are carried on is danger; but which of all the moral qualities is the first in danger? Courage. Now certainly courage is quite compatible with prudent calculation, but still they are things of quite a different kind, essentially different qualities of the mind; on the other hand, daring reliance on good fortune, boldness, rashness, are only expressions of courage, and all these propensities of the mind look for the fortuitous (or accidental), because it is their element.

We see therefore how from the commencement, the absolute, the mathematical as it is called, no where finds any sure basis in the calculations in the art of war; and that from the outset there is a play of possibilities, probabilities, good and bad luck, which spreads about with all the coarse and fine threads of its web, and makes war of all branches of human activity the most like a game of cards.

Student Analysis:

22.—How this accords best with the human mind in general.

Although our intellect always feels itself urged towards clearness and certainty, still our mind often feels itself attracted by uncertainty. Instead of threading its way with the understanding along the narrow path of philosophical investigations and logical conclusions, in order almost unconscious of itself, to arrive in spaces where it feels itself a stranger, and where it seems to part from all well known objects, it prefers to remain with the imagination in the realms of chance and luck. Instead of living yonder on poor necessity, it revels here in the wealth of possibilities; animated thereby, courage then takes wings to itself, and daring and danger make the element into which it launches itself, as a fearless swimmer plunges into the stream.

Shall theory leave it here, and move on, self satisfied with absolute conclusions and rules? Then it is of no practical use. Theory must also take into account the human element; it must accord a place to courage, to boldness, even to rashness. The art of war has to deal with living and with moral forces; the consequence of which is that it can never attain the absolute and positive. There is therefore everywhere a margin for the accidental; and just as much in the greatest things as in the smallest. As there is room for this accidental on the one hand, so on the other there must be courage and self-reliance in proportion to the room left. If these qualities are forthcoming in a high degree, the margin left may likewise be great. Courage and self reliance are therefore principles quite essential to war; consequently theory must only set up such rules as allow ample scope for all degrees and varieties of these necessary and noblest of military virtues. In daring there may still be wisdom also, and prudence as well, only that they are estimated by a different standard of value.

Student Analysis:

23.—War is always a serious means for a serious object.

Its more particular definition.

Such is war; such the commander who conducts it; such the theory which rules it. But war is no pastime; no mere passion for venturing and winning; no work of a free enthusiasm; it is a serious means for a serious object. All that appearance which it wears from the varying hues of fortune, all that it assimilates into itself of the oscillations of passion, of courage, of imagination, of enthusiasm, are only particular properties of this means.

The war of a community—of whole nations and particularly of civilised nations—always starts from a political condition, and is called forth by a political motive. It is therefore a political act. Now if it was a perfect, unrestrained and absolute expression of force, as we had to deduce it from its mere conception, then the moment it is called forth by policy it would step into the place of policy, and as something quite independent of it would set it aside, and only follow its own laws, just as a mine at the moment of explosion cannot be guided into any other direction than that which has been given to it by preparatory arrangements. This is how the thing has really been viewed hitherto, whenever a want of harmony between policy and the conduct of a war has led to theoretical distinctions of the kind. But it is not so, and the idea is radically false. War in the real world, as we have already seen, is not an extreme thing which expends itself at one single discharge; it is the operation of powers which do not develop themselves completely in the same manner and in the same measure, but which at one time expand sufficiently to overcome the resistance opposed by inertia or friction, while at another they are too weak to produce an effect; it is therefore, in a certain measure, a pulsation of violent force more or less vehement, consequently making its discharges and exhausting its powers more or less quickly, in other words conducting more or less quickly to the aim, but always lasting long enough to admit of influence being exerted on it in its course, so as to give it this or that direction, in short to be subject to the will of a guiding intelligence. Now if we reflect that war has its root in a political object, then naturally this original motive which called it into existence should also continue the first and highest consideration in the conduct of it. Still the political object is no despotic lawgiver on that account; it must accommodate itself to the nature of the means, and through that is often completely changed, but it always remains that which has a prior right to consideration. Policy therefore is interwoven with the whole action of war, and must exercise a continuous influence upon it as far as the nature of the forces exploding in it will permit.

Student Analysis:

24.—War is a mere continuation of policy by other means.

We see, therefore, that war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means. All beyond this which is strictly peculiar to war relates merely to the peculiar nature of the means which it uses. That the tendencies and views of policy shall not be incompatible with these means, the art of war in general and the commander in each particular case may demand, and this claim is truly not a trifling one. But however powerfully this may react on political views in particular cases, still it must always be regarded as only a modification of them; for the political view is the object, war is the means, and the means must always include the object in our conception.

Student Analysis:

25.—Diversity in the nature of wars.

The greater and more powerful the motives of a war, the more it affects the whole existence of a people, the more violent the excitement which precedes the war, by so much the nearer will the war approach to its abstract form, so much the more will it be directed to the destruction of the enemy, so much the nearer will the military and political ends coincide, so much the more purely military and less political the war appears to be; but the weaker the motives and the tensions, so much the less will the natural direction of the military element—that is, force—be coincident with the direction which the political element indicates; so much the more must therefore the war become diverted from its natural direction, the political object diverge from the aim of an ideal war, and the war appear to become political.

But that the reader may not form any false conceptions, we must here observe that, by this natural tendency of war, we only mean the philosophical, the strictly logical, and by no means the tendency of forces actually engaged in conflict, by which would be supposed to be included all the emotions and passions of the combatants. No doubt in some cases these also might be excited to such a degree as to be with difficulty restrained and confined to the political road; but in most cases such a contradiction will not arise, because, by the existence of such strenuous exertions a great plan in harmony therewith would be implied. If the plan is directed only upon a small object, then the impulses of feeling amongst the masses will be also so weak, that these masses will require to be stimulated rather than repressed.

Student Analysis:

26.—They may all be regarded as political acts.

Returning now to the main subject, although it is true that in one kind of war the political element seems almost to disappear, whilst in another kind it occupies a very prominent place, we may still affirm that the one is as political as the other; for if we regard the state policy as the intelligence of the personified state, then amongst all the constellations in the political sky which it has to compute, those must be included which arise when the nature of its relations imposes the necessity of a great war. It is only if we understand by policy not a true appreciation of affairs in general, but the conventional conception of a cautious, subtle, also dishonest craftiness, averse from violence, that the latter kind of war may belong more to policy than the first.

Student Analysis:

27.—Influence of this view on the right understanding of military history, and on the foundations of theory.

We see, therefore, in the first place, that under all circumstances war is to be regarded not as an independent thing, but as a political instrument; and it is only by taking this point of view that we can avoid finding ourselves in opposition to all military history. This is the only means of unlocking the great book and making it intelligible. Secondly, just this view shows us how wars must differ in character according to the nature of the motives and circumstances from which they proceed.

Now, the first, the grandest, and most decisive act of judgment which the statesman and general exercises is rightly to understand in this respect the war in which he engages, not to take it for something, or to wish to make of it something which, by the nature of its relations, it is impossible for it to be. This is, therefore, the first, the most comprehensive of all strategical questions. We shall enter into this more fully in treating of the plan of a war.

For the present we content ourselves with having brought the subject up to this point, and having thereby fixed the chief point of view from which war and its theory are to be studied.

Student Analysis:

28.—Result for theory.

War is, therefore, not only a true chameleon, because it changes its nature in some degree in each particular case, but it is also, as a whole, in relation to the predominant tendencies which are in it, a wonderful trinity, composed of the original violence of its elements, hatred and animosity, which may be looked upon as blind instinct; of the play of probabilities and chance, which make it a free activity of the soul; and of the subordinate nature of a political instrument, by which it belongs purely to the reason.

The first of these three phases concerns more the people; the second more the general and his army; the third more the Government. The passions which break forth in war must already have a latent existence in the peoples. The range which the display of courage and talents shall get in the realm of probabilities and of chance depends on the particular characteristics of the general and his army; but the political objects belong to the Government alone.

These three tendencies, which appear like so many different lawgivers, are deeply rooted in the nature of the subject, and at the same time variable in degree. A theory which would leave any one of them out of account, or set up any arbitrary relation between them, would immediately become involved in such a contradiction with the reality, that it might be regarded as destroyed at once by that alone.

The problem is, therefore, that theory shall keep itself poised in a manner between these three tendencies, as between three points of attraction.

The way in which alone this difficult problem can be solved we shall examine in the book on the "Theory of War." In every case the conception of war, as here defined, will be the first ray of light which shows us the true foundation of theory, and which first separates the great masses, and allows us to distinguish them from one another.

Student Analysis:

Seven “Cs” Analysis

Conflict Causes		Course	Consequences	Conquerors	Conquered	Clausewitz Connection
Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453)						
Fall of Constantinople (1453)						
Reconquista (Completed in 1492)						
War of the Roses (1455-1485)						
Ottoman-Hapsburg Wars (1526-1791)	Key	Battles: Siege of Vienna (1529)	Marked end of the Ottoman Empire’s expansion into Europe			
French Wars of Religion (1562-1598)						

Seven “Cs” Analysis

Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588)						
Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648)						
English Civil War (1641-1651)						
War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714)						
Great Northern War (1700-1721)		Key Battles: Narva Poltava				
Seven Years’ War [a.k.a. French and Indian War] (1756-1763)						

Seven “Cs” Analysis

American Revolutionary War (1775- 1783)						
Napoleonic Wars (1803- 1815)		Key Battles: Austerlitz Waterloo				
Crimean War (1853-1856)						
Wars of German Unification Austro- Prussian War (1866)						
Franco- Prussian War (1870-1871)						

Seven “Cs” Analysis

World War I (1914-1918)						
World War II (1939-1945)		Key Campaigns: Operation Torch Battle of Britain D-Day Battle of the Bulge				

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