Sway’s response to Jessica’s post

Clausewitz's focus on integrating military and non-military tools to achieve political objectives aligns effectively with the American response to the Spratly Islands situation in the South China Sea. Clausewitz also identifies the “center of gravity,” these complementary perspectives underscore the need for subtlety, flexibility, and the leveraging of regional partnerships to manage the volatile Spratly Islands situation. Additionally, other military theorists offer insights that could refine this strategy further. Based on Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, the United States should employ strategies that “The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.” and focus on shaping the strategic environment to prevent conflict escalation in the Spratly Islands. Sun Tzu emphasizes that the maximum success lies in breaking the enemy without direct confrontation. By synthesizing diverse military principles from various theorists, the U.S. could advocate for a pause on new occupations while developing mechanisms to address immediate tensions and foster longer-term cooperation.

Sway’s response to Aaron’s post

The proposed U.S. response emphasizes power projection to deter further escalation, aligning with Clausewitz's principle that force must counter opposing force within the constraints of international law. However, incorporating insights from other military theorists could offer a more nuanced approach. Sun Tzu’s guidance to “subdue the enemy without fighting” suggests that asymmetric warfare could de-escalate tensions without provoking conflict. While joint exercises and presence patrols showcase strength, they should be carefully calibrated to avoid reinforcing Chinese narratives of encirclement, which could escalate tensions further.

Alfred Thayer Mahan’s emphasis on controlling critical maritime chokepoints highlights the importance of strategic positioning. Instead of direct shows of force near contested features, the U.S. could enhance cooperation with allies by strengthening maritime domain awareness and conducting naval drills farther from contested areas to demonstrate resolve without direct provocation.

Moreover, J.C. Wylie’s cumulative strategy advocates for persistent, smaller-scale actions (James R. Holmes, [Cumulative Warfare: War by Statistics](https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/cumulative-warfare-war-by-statistics/), 2015). Building regional capacity through joint training programs and equipping allies with coast guard capabilities could bolster long-term stability. These measures, paired with targeted economic and diplomatic initiatives, would complement the Clausewitz's framework, ensuring a response that balances deterrence with strategic restraint, reducing the likelihood of kinetic engagement in the Spratly Islands.