

Causes of War

What Is War?

January 8, 2015

Today's Agenda

- 1. About me.**
- 2. What is war?**
- 3. What is a cause?**
- 4. The causes of war.**

What is

War?

Clausewitz, *On War*

A German philosophical treatise on the nature of war and military strategy, written after the Napoleonic Wars.

DEUTSCHE BUNDESPOST

CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ 1780-1831

60



1981

First Definition

"War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will" (p. 75).

Breaking the Enemy's Will, Part 1

Capabilities: How much force we can apply.

Resolve: The strength of our will—how much would we give up to get our enemy to submit?

Second Definition

"War is merely the continuation of policy by other means" (p. 87).

... where "other means" = organized military force

Breaking the Enemy's Will, Part 2

Capabilities: The maximal military force a state can muster for war.

Resolve: The costs (not just monetary) a state is willing to bear to achieve its political aim.

What is a

Cause?

(a crash course)

Causal Statements

"Hitler's rise caused World War II."

What exactly does this mean?

Causes and Counterfactuals

"X caused Y"

means

"If X had not happened, then Y would not have happened."



Why It's Hard to Learn about Causes

We can't re-run history.

The Causes Of War

Clausewitz's Recipe for War

- 1. Disagreement over policy.**
- 2. Use of military force to achieve policy aims.**

So What Causes War?

- 1. What policies do states disagree about?**
- 2. Why do they use force to resolve those disagreements?**

For Next Time

- **Read Blainey 1988, "The Abacus of Power" (download from Blackboard)**
- **Think about which supplemental readings you want to present on (have backups ready too)**

Image Sources

- Clausewitz stamp: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
- DeLorean: [Wikimedia Commons](#)