



# Classic Books of War

- Clausewitz: *On War*
  - Difficult to read, simple to understand
  - Purposes of war & how it is fought
  - Efficiency
- Sun Tzu: *The Art of War*
  - Simple to read, difficult to understand
  - Practice of war & how it is won
  - Effectiveness

# Clausewitz v. Sun Tzu

- I. On The Nature Of War
- II. On The Theory Of War
- III. On Strategy In General
- IV. The Engagement
- V. Military Forces
- VI. Defense
- VII. The Attack
- VIII. War Plans

- I. Estimates
- II. Waging War
- III. Offensive Strategy
- IV. Dispositions
- V. Energy
- VI. Weaknesses and Strengths
- VII. Manoeuvre
- VIII. The Nine Variables
- IX. Marches
- X. Terrain
- XI. The Nine Varieties of Ground
- XII. Attack by Fire
- XIII. Employment of Secret Agents

# Clausewitz: On War



- Carl Phillip Gottfried von Clausewitz (1780-1831)
- Prussian soldier, fought against Napoleon.
- Joined Russian staff after defeat of Prussia.
- On War: Magnum opus, Never finished.

# Purpose of War

- Definition 1: Theoretical (1.1.2)
  - War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.
- Definition 2: Ideal/Normative (1.1.24)
  - War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.
- Definition 3: Practice (p.127)
  - Essentially war is fighting, for fighting is the only effective principle in the manifold activities generally designated as war.
- Tension between theory, practice & ideal of war

# War in Theory

- War is interactive
  - War is never an isolated act (1.1.7)
  - War does not consist of a single short blow (1.1.8)
- War therefore tends to extremes through escalation
  - No logical limit to the use of force
  - Complete disarmament is required
  - Maximum exertion is required

# Practice of War

- Moderating Influences on War
  - Political objectives(1.1.12)
  - Superiority of Defense over Attack (1.1.17)
  - Imperfect knowledge (1.1.18)
- Non-scientific aspects of War
  - Chance
  - Emotions
  - Policy

# “Paradoxical Trinity”

- People
  - Primordial violence, hatred, and enmity
- Commander and Army
  - The play of chance and probability
- Government
  - Subordination as an instrument of policy to reason



# Sun Tzu: The Art of War

- Sun Tzu (544-496 BC)
- Wrote the original text shortly before 510 BC.
- The text was preserved in China and brought to the West by the French.
- Audience: Think Machiavelli
- Little else known about his life except...



# Sun Tzu: Fortune Cookies?

I.19: “When near, make it appear that you are far away; when far away, that you are near.”

I.25: “When he is united, divide him.”

II.3: “Victory is the main object in war.”

III.1: “Generally in war the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this.”

V.19: “Order or disorder depends on organization.”

VII.28: “Do not attack his elite troops.”

IX.20: “When the trees are seen to move the enemy is advancing.”

X.10: “Other conditions being equal, if a force attacks one ten times its size, the result is flight.”

# “Five Fundamental Factors”

- Moral Influence
  - “That which causes the people to be in harmony with their leaders.” (I.4)
- Weather
- Terrain
- Command
  - “The general’s qualities of wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage, and wisdom.” (I.7)
- Doctrine
  - “Organization, control, assignment of appropriate ranks to officers, regulation of supply routes, and the provision of principal items used by the army.” (I.8)

# Clausewitz v. Sun Tzu

- The Elements of War
  - What are the fundamental factors?
- Politics
  - What is the role of politics in war?
- Strategy
  - What is the best strategy?
- Offense/Defense
  - What are the advantages to offense and defense?
- Intelligence
  - How valuable is intelligence?

# The Elements of War

## Clausewitz

### Paradoxical Trinity (I.1.28)

- People:
  - Primordial violence, hatred, and enmity
- Commander and Army:
  - The play of chance and probability
- Government:
  - Subordination as an instrument of policy to reason

## Sun Tzu

### Five Fundamental Factors (I.11-14)

- Government (Ruler):
  - Moral Influence
- Commander and Army:
  - Weather
  - Terrain
  - Command
  - Doctrine

# Politics

## Clausewitz

- Politics give purpose to war (1.1.24)
  - War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.
- Politics keep war rational, make it serve particular ends

## Sun Tzu

Three ways a ruler brings misfortune (III.19-29)

- To order advance/retreat when ignorant
- To administer military affairs
- To exercise military responsibilities

# Strategy

## Clausewitz

“Of all the possible aims in war, the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces always appears as the highest.” (I.2)

Multiple means:

- Destruction of forces
- Conquest of territory
- Temporary occupation
- Political projects
- Await attacks

Center of Gravity

## Sun Tzu

“To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”  
(III.3)

Attack the enemy’s (III.4-7)

- ...strategy
- ...his alliances
- ...his army
- ...his cities

# Offense/Defense Balance

## Clausewitz

- Superiority of Defense over Attack explains suspension of war
- Culminating Point of Attack
  - Paradox of the offense:
  - Army grows weaker with every success

## Sun Tzu

- Asymmetry (IV.5-7)
- Force Ratios: (III.12-17)
  - 10:1 Surround
  - 5:1 Attack
  - 2:1 Divide
  - 1:1 Engage
  - <1:1 Withdraw or Elude



# Intelligence

## Clausewitz

- Strategic intelligence is sometimes reliable
- Tactical intelligence is unreliable
  - True in Clausewitz's day;
  - True in Sun Tzu's day;
  - True today?

## Sun Tzu

Intelligence is central:

- Deceive the enemy
- Know his plans, location, strength, etc.

Most chapters deal with intelligence