

Assignment 2

Course: **War and Peace**

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Since the dawn of time, lifeforms of all kinds have resolved their problems by fighting. None the less, humans have resorted to many forms of war to get their points across. Conventional war can be used to define many of the worldwide conflicts over the prior centuries. Carl von Clausewitz explores definitions of conventional war and its relationship with society in his chapter of the book *On the Nature of War*.

War and peace have showed up through out history in many ways. One method of defining many of the worldwide conflicts from recent centuries is called “Conventional War”. This definition describes the phenomenon of two or more states being in conflict, where on state is attempting to forcefully concede the other state. Almost always, there is a financial or philosophical factor that drives the conflict and both sides will have organized armies and tactics. Clausewitz sums this concept up efficiently by stating, “War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.” (Clausewitz et al., 1984). The American Civil War is a example of conventional war in which the Union and Confederacy were in conflict over slavery being established throughout new territories in the United States. Looking back, it is clear how the organization of militaries and use of weaponry to engage in direct battles can define the Civil War as a conventional war.

While the definition of Conventional War is very clear, certain assumptions have to be made for classifications to exist. The primary drawback to conventional war is its focus on its traditional and somewhat black and white aspects. Conventional War assumes that there is a clear separation between militaries and civilians. For many wars, these lines are blurred. Furthermore, as society and technology advances, so do warfare tactics. For example contemporary war sees remote missions and more complex motives that move away from territory control, etc. For the definition of Conventional War to work, it would need to be adaptable to these changes.

The relationship between state, military, and society is both complex and dynamic. In general, military forces are primarily just tools to drive political forces (Clausewitz et al., 1984). Clausewitz explains that war without military involvement or vice versa is unsustainable and will lead to conventional war (Clausewitz et al., 1984). The interaction between states and society works in both directions. Since policies are often driven by ethical reasons, society ultimately drives ethical conflicts and war. On the other hand, states and militaries can burden society with the needs and fallout of war.

Conventional War can be a useful tool to describe many worldwide conflicts and offers an interesting perspective to the way society interacts with states and militaries. The traditional definition of Conventional War has drawbacks rooting in its straightforward definition that might not make it the best for use for contemporary conflicts. In conclusion, *On the Nature of War* by Carl von Clausewitz provides a unique and in depth analysis on why and what is required for war to exist.

# References

Clausewitz, C. von, Howard, M., Paret, P., & Brodie, B. (1984). On the Nature of War. *Princton University Press*.