

The Nature of War

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984) p. 119. This unfinished classic is arguably the definitive treatment of the nature and theory of war. All Marine officers should consider this book essential reading.

2. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: New American Library, 1974) p. 323.

3. A. A. Vandegrift, “*Battle Doctrine for Front Line Leaders*,” (Third Marine Division, 1944) p. 7.

4. “War is nothing but a duel [*Zweikampf*, literally ‘two-struggle’] on a larger scale. Countless duels go to make up war, but a picture of it as a whole can be formed by imagining a pair of wrestlers. Each tries through physical force to compel the other to do his will; his *immediate* aim is to *throw* his opponent in order to make him incapable of further resistance.” Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 75. See also Alan Beyerchen, “Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War,” *International Security* (Winter 1992/1993) pp. 66–67.

5. Clausewitz, p. 121.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 595.

7. For a first-hand description of human experience and reaction in war, read Guy Sajer's *The Forgotten Soldier* (Baltimore, MD: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co., 1988), a powerful account of the author's experience as a German infantryman on the eastern front during the Second World War.

8. "Kind-hearted people might, of course, think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed: war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst . . .

"This is how the matter must be seen. It would be futile—even wrong—to try to shut one's eyes to what war really is from sheer distress at its brutality." Clausewitz, pp. 75–76.

9. For an insightful study of the reaction of men to combat, see S. L. A. Marshall's *Men Against Fire* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1961). Despite criticism of his research methods, Marshall's insights on this point remain valuable.

10. *The American Heritage Dictionary* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1983).

11. In his often-quoted maxim, Napoleon assigned an actual ratio: "In war, the moral is to the material as three to one." Peter G. Tsouras, *Warrior's Words: A Dictionary of Military Quotations* (London: Cassell, 1992) p. 266.

The Theory of War

1. Clausewitz, p. 87.
2. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. S. B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) p. 85. Like *On War*, *The Art of War* should be on every Marine officer's list of essential reading. Short and simple to read, *The Art of War* is every bit as valuable today as when it was written about 400 B.C..
3. Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923) p. 5. The passage continues: "Nearly all battles which are regarded as masterpieces of the military art, from which have been derived the foundation of states and the fame of commanders, have been battles of manoeuvre in which the enemy has found himself defeated by some novel expedient or device, some queer, swift, unexpected thrust or stratagem. In many battles the losses of the victors have been small. There is required for the composition of a great commander not only massive common sense and reasoning power, not only imagination, but also an element of legerdemain, an original and sinister touch, which leaves the enemy puzzled as well as beaten. It is because military leaders are credited with gifts of this order which enable them to ensure victory and save slaughter that their profession is held in such high honour . . .
"There are many kinds of manoeuvre in war, some only of which take place upon the battlefield. There are manoeuvres far to the flank or rear. There are manoeuvres in time, in diplomacy, in mechanics, in psychology; all of which are removed from the battlefield, but react often decisively upon it, and the object of all is to find easier ways, other than sheer slaughter, of achieving the main purpose."

4. Clausewitz, pp. 69 and 87. It is important to recognize that military force does not replace the other elements of national power but supplements them. Clausewitz' most complete expression of this famous idea is found on page 605: "We maintain . . . that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means. We deliberately use the phrase 'with the addition of other means' because we also want to make it clear that war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different."

5. Ibid., pp. 87–88.

6. The term *annihilation* implies for many the absolute physical destruction of all the enemy's troops and equipment. This is rarely achieved and seldom necessary. Incapacitation, on the other hand, is literally what we mean to convey: the destruction of the enemy's military capacity to resist. See Hans Delbrück, *History of the Art of War Within the Framework of Political History*, trans. Walter J. Renfroe, Jr., especially vol. 4, chap. IV (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975–1985).

7. *Strategy of erosion* is known as *strategy of attrition* in classical military theory. The concepts are the same. We use the term erosion to avoid confusion with the tactical concept of attrition warfare. See Delbrück, especially vol. 4, chap. IV.

8. **Strategic level of war:** "The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multina-

tional military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve those objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

9. **National strategy**, also referred to as grand strategy: “The art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

10. **Military strategy**: “The art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or the threat of force.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

11. **Tactical level of war**: “The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

12. **Operational level of war**: “The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative

support of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

13. Clausewitz, p. 357.

14. Ibid., p. 528.

15. For an excellent discussion of the attrition-maneuver spectrum and additional historical examples of attrition and maneuver, see Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987) pp. 91–112.

16. **Combat power:** “The total means of destructive and/or disruptive force which a military unit/formation, can apply against the opponent at a given time.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

17. Clausewitz, p. 194.

18. Tempo is often associated with a mental process known variously as the “decision cycle,” “OODA loop,” or “Boyd cycle” after John Boyd who pioneered the concept in his lecture, “The Patterns of Conflict.” Boyd identified a four-step mental process: observation, orientation, decision, and action. Boyd theorized that each party to a conflict first observes the situation. On the basis of the observation, he orients; that is, he makes an estimate of the situation. On the basis of the orientation, he makes a decision. Finally, he implements the decision—he acts. Because his action has created a new situation, the process begins anew. Boyd argued that

the party who consistently completes the cycle faster gains an advantage that increases with each cycle. His enemy's reactions become increasingly slower by comparison and therefore less effective until, finally, he is overcome by events. "A Discourse on Winning and Losing: The Patterns of Conflict," unpublished lecture notes and diagrams, August 1987.

19. Clausewitz, p. 198.

20. Ibid, p. 190.

21. See Clausewitz, pp. 485 and 595–596. **Centers of gravity:** "Those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight." (Joint Pub 1-02)

Preparing for War

1. Hans von Seeckt, *Thoughts of a Soldier*, trans. G. Waterhouse (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1930) p. 123.

2. FMFRP 12-46, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia* (August, 1992) p. 41. FMFRP 12-46 is a historical reprint of Operation Plan 712 written by Maj Earl H. Ellis in 1921.

3. **Force planning:** "Planning associated with the creation and maintenance of military capabilities. It is primarily the responsibility of the Military Departments and Services and is conducted under the administrative control that runs from the Secretary of

Defense to the Military Departments and Services.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

4. **Doctrine:** “Fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

5. Field Manual 100-5, *Tentative Field Service Regulations: Operations*, published by the War Department (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939) p. 31.

6. “In a commander a bold act may prove to be a blunder. Nevertheless it is a laudable error, not to be regarded on the same footing as others. Happy the army where ill-timed boldness occurs frequently; it is a luxuriant weed, but indicates the richness of the soil. Even foolhardiness—that is, boldness without object—is not to be despised: basically it stems from daring, which in this case has erupted with a passion unrestrained by thought. Only when boldness rebels against obedience, when it defiantly ignores an expressed command, must it be treated as a dangerous offense; then it must be prevented, not for its innate qualities, but because an order has been disobeyed, and in war obedience is of cardinal importance.” Clausewitz, pp. 190–191.

The Conduct of War

1. Sun Tzu, p. 101.
2. Ibid., p. 134.

3. Sir William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd, 1956) pp. 550–551.

4. **Maneuver:** “Employment of forces on the battlefield through movement in combination with fire, or fire potential, to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy in order to accomplish the mission.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

5. Boyd introduces the idea of implicit communication as a command tool in “A Discourse on Winning and Losing: An Organic Design for Command and Control.”

6. Hence the terms *area of influence* and *area of interest*. **Area of influence:** “A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander’s command or control.” **Area of interest:** “That area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory to the objectives of current or planned operations. This area also includes areas occupied by enemy forces who could jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

7. George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1979) p. 354.

8. In the context of command and control, also called *mission command and control*. Mission tactics involves the use of *mission-type orders*. **Mission-type order:** “Order to a unit to perform a mission without specifying how it is to be accomplished.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

9. David Hillel Gelernter, *Mirror Worlds, or, The Day Software Puts the Universe in a Shoebox: How It Will Happen and What It Will Mean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) pp. 51–53. If “*insight* is the illumination to be achieved by penetrating inner depths, *topsight* is what comes from a far-overhead vantage point, from a bird’s eye view that reveals *the whole*—the big picture; how the parts fit together.”

10. **Mission:** “The task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefor.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

11. Hence the terms *reconnaissance pull* and *command push*, respectively. See William S. Lind’s *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985) pp. 18–19.