1.1: Books of War

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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