

Understanding War: Fundamental Terms and Concepts I

By

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War is the primeval policy of all living things, and this to the extent that in the deepest sense combat and life are identical, for when the will to fight is extinguished, so is life itself.

—Oswald Spengler

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 itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different.¹

—Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Studying war is like peeling back an onion. There are numerous layers that have to be revealed and comprehended to develop a more complete understanding of this most destructive of human behaviors. The outer most layer in conventional war, represents the edge of the battlefield where the killing takes place, in insurgency war it represents the point of contact between the counterinsurgent forces and people. To get to this surface layer a people had to pass through layers upon layers of social and political transformations, cultural and intellectual evolution, technological and economic development, and demographic and industrial growth, all of which required centuries of history. The inner most layer, the core, is where the origins of war are found. The core is where human nature is found, passion, fear, anger, hate, greed, covetiveness, gluttony, lust, pride, honor, arrogance, contempt, shame, jealousy, envy, glory, and other basic emotions that drive human thinking and behavior. The core influences every subsequent layer. The layer that immediately surrounds the core represents culture, the way of life of a people. This layer, culture, influences every subsequent layer. Whereas war is a function of human nature, the unique way in which a given people conduct war is a function of their

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

culture. And whereas people cannot change human nature they can influence culture, and hence every subsequent layer that leads ultimately to the battlefield, or insurgency/counterinsurgency warfare, the point of contact with another people.

The following fundamental terms and concepts, and discussions of them are designed to enhance the students understanding of war, and ability to analyze war. To analyze war students have to study every layer of development and master certain basic terms, concepts, ideas, and theories. These tools make it possible to think critically and comprehensively about war, to produce well reasoned assessments, judgments, doctrines, and strategies, but not absolute truths. They also provide students with a common, accepted language enhancing communication and the dissemination of ideas.

In war, it is said “the enemy always gets a vote,” meaning there are always unknowns that disrupt plans and diminish effectiveness. We can never know with absolute certainty what the enemy will do. However, through the study of war and our enemies we can greatly diminish the number of unknowns, and take actions to limit the number of possible courses of actions available to them. The following tools are taken from numerous sources; however, *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz’ masterful study, is a major source. Definitions from the Department of Defense Dictionary are another source. The terms delineated are used throughout the world by scholars and professional soldiers to analyze war and explain victory and defeat. The following terms are defined and discussed: The Modern Nation State, Ideology, The Spectrum of War: Limited to Total, Policy and Political Objectives, The Trinity of War, The Center of Gravity, The Offensive and Defensive Forms of War, The Levels of War, Strategy, Combat Power and the Culmination Point, Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, Guerrilla Warfare, and others. Obviously no such list is ever complete. However, the terms delineated are considered the minimum required to have the

foundation necessary to understand war. The reader will note there is some overlap in the discussion of terms. This was unavoidable. To explain one concept frequently required bringing in other interrelated ideas. To make the work more useful a summary is provided at the end of the glossary. The terms in this glossary are not presented in alphabetical order. There is logic to the progression of ideas, concepts, and theories. The ideas build upon one another. I recommend that these few pages be read in the order of progression to maximize comprehension. The reader can then go back to specific terms to reinforce their comprehension.

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Culture War is a human endeavor the conduct of which is influenced by culture. The way a people fight is a function of culture. Culture has been defined various ways. Consider the following definitions:

Culture, the total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in thought, speech, *action*, and artifacts [technologies] and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through the use of tools, language, and systems of abstract thought; the body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits constituting a distinct complex of tradition of a racial, religious, or social group... a complex of typical behavior or standardized social characteristics peculiar to a specific group, occupation or profession, sex, age, grade, or social class....²

Culture... refers to the ways of life of people in a given society, to their social heritage. According to... the anthropologist Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by men as a member of society." In any society there exists a body of knowledge, ideas, values (conceptions of desirability), attitudes, customs, myths, prejudices, and the like, which make up the nonmaterial aspects of the culture at that time and place.³

Colin Gray advanced the idea of a "strategic culture or political culture:"

Culture refers to the socially transmitted habits of mind, traditions, and preferred methods of operations that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security

² Philip Babcock Gove, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1971), 552.

³ Charles H. Coates and Roland J. Pellegrin, *Military Sociology: a Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life* (Maryland: Social Science Press, 1965), 26, 27.

community. Culture may be qualified for more precise usage, as in *strategic culture* or *political culture*.... Strategic culture is the result of opportunities, of resources, of the skill with which those opportunities and resources have been managed, and of the lessons which a society decides its unfolding history should teach. *To a considerable degree societies are prisoners of their past. Policymakers have been educated both formally and by life experiences in their particular society to expect certain relationships generally to hold true....*⁴

Gray further noted the importance of culture in understanding the thinking and actions of a people:

If the cultural and stylistic proclivities of Americans were not so important for the consideration of basic national security policy, they would be excluded from discussion here. But those policy choices *are* considered by an American people distinctive in its strategic culture from other security communities. The American people are geopolitically conditioned as Americans to think and feel in a reasonably distinctive American way about those choices. The roots of American strategic culture lie in a frontier tradition, an experience and expectation of success in national endeavors, experience with an abundance of resources for defense, a dominant political philosophy of liberal idealism, and a sense of separateness—moral and geostrategic—from the evil doings of the Old World.⁵

Gray argues that American policy choices in matters of national security cannot be understood without some understanding of American culture. Gray concludes that that “all human beings are culturally educated or programmed,” and that “culture embraces both ideas and behavior and that it is inescapable.”⁶ The word “programmed” implies that people have to act in accordance with their programming; hence, if you understand the program you can predict the behavior. But people and nations do not always act in accordance with cultural norms. People do innovate, improvise, and create, and cultural norms frequently conflict, causing the evolution of culture. Gray too recognizes that agents “amend” culture. However, his terminology is too strong. With knowledge and experience people can change culturally imbued patterns of

⁴ Colin Gray, *War, Peace, and Victory* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 45, 46.

⁵ Gray, *The Geopolitics of Super Power*, 43. Also see: Colin Gray, “Strategy in the Nuclear Age: The United States, 1945-1991,” *The Making of Strategy*, ed. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 579-611.

⁶ Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 129.

behavior. While history, legends, cultural inheritance, and myths influence actions in the present by creating structures and strategies for behavior, people are learning beings and their destiny is not predetermined by their past, their culture. Political scientists and historians also employ anthropological analytical methods to advance arguments on the causes and conduct of war, the noted historian Victor Davis Hanson argues that there is a uniquely *Western Way of War*, established by the ancient Greeks, and that it is superior to that of all of culture, and the reason for Western dominance on Earth.⁷ John Vasquez, in his analysis of the causes of war wrote:

The hard-liners' [agents] cognitive map of the world tends to be simple rather than complex. Hard-liners tend to be nationalistic and hold a militaristic view of the world. The hard-liner as a type is hostile toward and distrustful of the other nation, and feels unable to control events. In a crisis they are risk-takers. In personal relations they are prone to dominance. Except for the last, which is a personality characteristic, it is clear that the characteristics hard-liners share are something they have learned from their experience or imbibed from the culture around them.⁸

Hard-liners are predisposed to see specific structures in the objective environment, and are inculcated with cultural imbued pattern of behavior, cultural strategies, that recognize war as an acceptable and possibly preferred practice. Vasquez concluded that: "hard-liners can be defined as individuals who have a personal disposition (due to their beliefs) to adopt a foreign policy that is adamant in not compromising its goals and who argue in favor of the efficacy and legitimacy of threat and force."⁹

Nationalism Hans Kohn in his work *Nationalism* wrote:

The French Revolution... drove France and Europe into war more prolonged and more devastating than any since the wars of religion. In the turmoil ancient states disappeared, new loyalties were born, national passions were aroused for the first time.... The wars of the French Republic appealed to a degree unknown before to the national devotion and unity of the people. On September 25, 1792, George Jacques Danton (1759-1794)

⁷ Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

⁸ Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, 206, 207.

⁹ Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, 202.

demanded that “France must be an indivisible whole: she must have unity of representation. The citizens of Marseilles wish to clasp hands with the citizens of Dunkerque. I therefore, ask the death penalty against whomsoever wishes to destroy the unity of France....” This passion seemed to bear fruit: the newly organized republican armies defeated the enemy. Not the monarchy but the nation triumphed on the battlefields.¹⁰

During the French Revolution the peasants, bourgeoisie, and much of the nobility became Frenchmen, citizens of France with rights and privileges and duties to the nation-state. And through war with the new nation of France, through defeat at Jena in 1806, the peasants of central Europe began the process of become Prussians, and later Germans. War and other social forces started the process of changing peasant/subjects into sovereigns/citizens. This process did not take place over night as the result of a single battle. It took decades for this transformation to produce Germans. The process, however, start during the Napoleonic wars. (Some would argue during the Renaissance.)

Robert R. Palmer, in a description of Europe during the “Old Regime” (the period prior to the French Revolution and the grant of citizenship to all the people of a state), wrote: “A ‘good people’ was one that obeyed the law, paid its taxes, and was loyal to the reigning house; it need have no sense of its own identity as a people, or unity as a nation, or responsibility for public affairs, or obligation to put forth a supreme effort in war.”¹¹ Palmer further noted that: “The tie between the sovereign [king] and subject was bureaucratic, administrative, and fiscal, an external mechanical connection of ruler and ruled [or sovereign and subject], strongly in contrast to the principle brought in by the Revolution, *which, in its doctrine of responsible citizenship and sovereign people, effected an almost religious fusion of the government with the governed....*”

¹⁰ Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (Malabar, Florida: Robert Krieger Publishing Co., 1965), 27.

¹¹ R. R. Palmer, “Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bulow: From Dynastic to National War,” *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Peter Paret (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 92.

The people, according to Palmer, “felt that they participated in the state, that they derived great advantages from their government, and therefore, should fight for it loyally and with passion.”¹²

Nation-State A state is a political entity. A nation is cultural entity. The modern nation-state combines the political and cultural entities to form the most powerful political and military organization ever known to humanity. Consider the words of the anthropologist Bronislaw

Malinowski:

I submit that the distinction between political and cultural unit is necessary. To implement it terminologically, I suggest that we coin the two expressions “tribe-nation” and “tribe state.” The tribe-nation is the unit of cultural cooperation. The tribe-state has to be defined in terms of political unity, that is, of centralized authoritative power and the corresponding organization of armed force. It is clear... that the tribe-nation is an earlier and more fundamental type of cultural differentiation than the tribe-state. The two do not coincide, for we have many instances of the tribe-state as a subdivision of the tribe-nation [and tribe-nations as subdivisions of tribe-states]. The Maori of New Zealand, the Trobriand Islands, the Zulu before European advent, as well as many North American tribes, could be quoted as examples of this. Among them the tribe-nation embraces many tribe-states. On the other hand, we could adduce from East and West Africa examples in which two or more tribe-nations are united within the same tribe-state.¹³

Yugoslavia, a political entity prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, was a state which enclosed many small nations. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the authority and power that maintained the state, those small, individual nations immediately went to war with one another in search of a new statehood that corresponded to their individual cultural entities, the nations. This is a very important differentiation, absolutely necessary to understand modern war. For example, Iraq under Saddam Hussein was a state comprised of three major nations, the Sunnis, the Shia, and the Kurds. Hussein maintained the state, much the way Stalin maintained the Soviet Union, and control over Eastern Europe, with fear, military power, and ruthlessness. Malinowski further explained:

¹² Palmer, “Fredrick the Great....,” *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 92, 119.

¹³ Bronislaw Malinowski, “An Anthropological Analysis of War” *War: Studies from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology*, edited Leon Bramson and George W. Goethals (NY: Basic Book, 1968), 256, 257.

The two principles of statehood and nationality must, therefore, be kept apart in theory, even as they are different in cultural reality. Nevertheless, there has always existed a convergence of the two principles and a tendency toward the coalescence of the two groups—the nation and the state. In Europe [and other parts of the world] this tendency, under the name of nationalism, has made its definite appearance in political aspirations and *as a cause of war and rebellion ever since the French Revolution and the Napoleonic War*.¹⁴

This new entity was one of the sources of power that made it possible for the West to maintain the system of imperialism. The *state*, the political entity, possesses a centralized government with physical control over all the geographic areas within its borders. It possesses an army that can defend its borders from external threats, and army or police force to maintain internal security. *Most important, it possesses the legitimate, recognized authority to extract from its people*. People are the primary sources of power. Governments form agencies, bureaucracies that make it possible for the centralized government to extract all the resources necessary to administer and defend the state. The collection of taxes and the raising of armies are the most fundamental functions of state governments. The *nation* is the culture unit. The people of a nation are connected to one another in significant ways. They are connected through language, family, race, ethnicity, religion, laws, customs, and traditions. *Most importantly, these connections make it possible for the people of a nation to form communities with sufficient cohesion to motivate people to cooperate and sacrifice for one another, to look beyond self-interest and identify with the interests of the larger community, the cultural unit*. It is the willingness to cooperate and sacrifice that makes total war possible. States that are not nations are incapable of fighting total war; however, under the right conditions, the peoples of a state can rapidly become a unified nation.

Ideology Ideologies can provide the ideas for war, produce the cohesion necessary to form nations, and produce the motivations required to fight war. Ideology, according to

¹⁴ Malinowski, 257 (italics added).

Webster's dictionary is: "a systemic scheme or coordinated body of ideas or concepts especially about human life or culture; ...the integrated assertions, theories, and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program <a national ideology>; an extremist sociopolitical program of philosophy constructed wholly or in part on factitious or hypothetical ideational bases." Hannah Arendt defined ideology:

Until the fateful days of the "scramble for Africa," race-thinking had been one of the many free opinions which, within the general framework of liberalism, argued and fought each other to win the consent of public opinion. Only a few of them became full-fledged ideologies, that is, systems based upon a single opinion that proved strong enough to attract and persuade a majority of people and broad enough to lead them through the various experience and situations of an average modern life. For an ideology differs from a simple opinion in that it claims to possess either the key to history, or the solution for all the "riddles of the universe," or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man. Few ideologies have won enough prominence to survive the hard competitive struggle of persuasion, and only two have come out on top and essentially defeated all others: the ideology which interprets history as an economic struggle of classes, and the other that interprets history as a natural fight of races. The appeal of both to large masses was so strong that they were able to enlist state support and establish themselves as official national doctrines.

Arendt further noted ideologies are advanced by political entities, and serve the needs of political discourse:

The tremendous power of persuasion inherent in the main ideologies of our times is not accidental. Persuasion is not possible without appeal to either experience or desires, in other words immediate political needs. Plausibility in these matters comes neither from scientific facts, as the various brands of Darwinists would like us to believe, nor from historical laws, as the historians pretend, in their efforts to discover the law according to which civilization rise and fall. Every full-fledged ideology has been created, continued and improved as a political weapon and not as a theoretical doctrine.... The fact that racism is the main ideological weapon of imperialistic politics is so obvious that it seems as though many students prefer to avoid this beaten track of truism.¹⁵

For the purposes of this study *ideology* is a set and system of ideas with the ability, or potential ability, to bind people together in significant ways thereby creating the cohesion necessary for a people to willing sacrifice for one another, to willing fight wars. Secondly

¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (NY: Schocken Books, 1951), 211-213.

ideology motivates behaviors that can be directed towards specific objectives, including aggressive wars of conquest. Both elements are crucial. The purpose of ideology is to influence the way people think and behave, to mobilize them, to get them involved and moving in the same direction in order to achieve specific objectives, or create some vision of life. Nazism, Communism, Fascism, Imperialism, Racism, Militarism, Liberalism, Conservatism, Neo-conservatism and other –isms joined people together, mobilized them, and motivated specific behaviors to achieve specific objectives. These ideologies, at least in part, caused and influenced the conduct of the great World Wars that produced levels of destruction never experienced throughout all human history. More recently, neoconservative ideology inspired the ideas and motivated the action of the Bush Administration which took the United States to war in Iraq, an unnecessary war.

Effective ideologies do not just unite people in common causes they also have the potential to motivate “superhuman” effort in war. Racist ideology motivated the Holocaust, the destruction of the European Jews. Governments sometimes seek objectives that diminish the security of a people, objectives that diminish the chances for peace, objective that diminish or destroy the human spirit and humans. Lucy Dawidowicz, in her work *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945*, delineated major tenets of German nationalism:

"One day the world will be restored to health by the German spirit." That statement epitomized the unique character of the German nationalism which German philosophers and poets, historians and intellectuals had shaped and nurtured for a century.... [A] fundamental idea of German thinkers from Fichte and Arndt on had fostered—that the German nation was not merely different from other nations but superior to them. Endowed with supposedly unique and unsurpassed physical, mental, and moral qualities, the German nation—so the argument went—was destined for world leadership. Secondly, German nationalism had its roots in an idea whose origins have been traced back to Wilhelm von Humboldt—that the individual could best fulfill himself through

subordination to his historic community, an entity whose ideal manifestation was seen to be the national state.¹⁶

Major tenets of German nationalism were evident in Hitler's National Socialist ideology, which greatly influenced the behavior of the *Wehrmacht* during World War II. The German Army on the Eastern Front engaged in extermination warfare. While fighting with great courage and tenacity it committed incredible acts of barbarism. It failed to adhere to the laws of war that had been evolving in Western civilization for centuries, laws which governed the treatment of civilians and prisoners of war. Nazi ideology which took away the humanity of certain people opened the door to barbarism.

Psychological Damage Nations, a people, can suffer severe traumas that cause psychological damages which impede or prevent them from seeing the world as it really is, and hence, acting in a balanced, responsible manner. Russians in the wake of World War II were severely traumatized. The suffering, unparalleled deaths of over 30 million people (some estimates are as high as 40 million), destruction of their homes, and presence of foreign armies occupying their homelands caused Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on a national scale making it impossible for the Russian people and leadership act in an objective balanced manner following the war. The "Cold War" was, in my view, inevitable in the aftermath of World War II. Russians were in a psychological disposition to trust no one. Americans suffered a much milder case of PTSD in the wake of the Vietnam War. This psychological trauma, while its effects have diminishing over time, influences American behavior to this day. In the wake of the terrorists attack on 9/11 the American people suffered form PTSD, and, without doubt, this condition made war highly probable. This important aspect of human behavior is rarely addressed by historians, political scientists, and other researchers who endeavor to explain

¹⁶ Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historian* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981).

human behavior. Consider the definitions of PTSD developed by the American Psychiatric

Association (APA):

The essential feature of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; *or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member of other close associate.*

Note: one does not have to personally witness the traumatic event to suffer from PTSD; though just about every American witnessed the collapse of the World Trade Center's twin towers, again and again and again on national news. Knowledge of violence visited upon family member, other close associates, or members of a specific ethnic, racial, or cultural group can cause PTSD. The APA diagnostic manual also states: "The disorder may be especially severe or long lasting when the stressor is of human design (e.g., torture, rape)." The severity of trauma influences the extent of the damage, and consequently the degree of variation in behavior and thinking from the norm. People suffering from PTSD display some of the following behaviors:

Individuals with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder may describe painful guilt feelings about surviving when others did not survive or about the things they had to do to survive. Phobic avoidance of situations or activities that resemble or symbolize the original trauma may interfere with interpersonal relationships and lead to marital conflict, divorce, or loss of job. The following associated constellation of symptoms may occur and are more commonly seen in association with an interpersonal stressor... impaired affect modulation; self-destructive and impulsive behavior; dissociative symptoms; somatic complaints; feelings of ineffectiveness, shame; despair, or hopelessness; feeling permanently damaged; a loss of previous sustained beliefs; hostility; social withdrawal; feeling constantly threatened; impaired relationships with others; or a change from the individual's previous personality characteristics.¹⁷

To be sure, all of these symptoms do not occur in a single individual or single society or culture. However, it is possible to identify specific behaviors that are related to historical events

¹⁷ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th Ed. (Washington DC: Published by the American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 424, 425.

and the current disposition, behavior, and attitudes of a people. *When considering the causes of war, the psychological of health of a people must be considered. When developing strategy for war, the psychological disposition of the enemy and allies must be considered.* To be sure, one cannot understand the behavior of Israel with knowing something about the Holocaust. One cannot understand the recent behavior of the United States without understanding the trauma created by the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

The Spectrum of War, Limited to Total Clausewitz wrote, “War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”¹⁸ He argues that, “The maximum use of force is in no way incompatible with the simultaneous use of the intellect.” And that, “If one side uses force without compunction, undeterred by the bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand. That side will force the other to follow suit: each will drive its opponent toward extremes, and the only limiting factors are the counterpoises inherent in war.” Clausewitz delineated an observable fact of human nature, which enables him to explain that wars are fought with different levels of intensity and commitment; and hence, different levels of expenditures in resources. The quality and character of commitment to a particular political objective, influences the quality and character of resources a political body is willing to expend in a given war.

Clausewitz advanced the idea that there is a spectrum, or a range of war, “Thus, it follows that without any inconsistency wars can have all degrees of importance and intensity, ranging from a war of extermination down to simple armed observation.”¹⁹ Absolute or total war, where a nation-state commits all its resources to a given war marks one end of the spectrum. At the other end of the spectrum is limited war, which proceeds downward from total war, to the

¹⁸ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Trans. and ed. Michael Howard & Peter Paret (Princeton University, 1976), 75.

¹⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 81.

minimal commitment of resources necessary to claim the status of war. Thus, the Vietnam and Korean Wars were limited wars for the United States, but for the North Vietnamese and North Koreans Communist they was a very total war, requiring the commitment of the vast majority of the resources of these relatively new, post-World War II nation-state. World War II for United States was a near total war. It required enormous resources. However, while it is considered a total war, it was not in fact an absolute war. American resources were not fully committed to the war, for example, the United States formed 89 combat divisions, infantry and armor, to fight the war. However, under the Victory Plan developed by the War Department it was estimated that given the male population of the U.S. approximately 215 division could have been formed, without diminishing the productive capacity of the nation.²⁰ Hence, even though World War II is considered a total war, it did not require the full commitment of American manpower resources. No war, yet, has ever required the full commitment of the human resources of the United States. In fact, Clausewitz argues that such a commitment is not possible. There are always limiting factors. In reality, then, all wars are limited war. Some wars are simply more limited than others.

The resources of a nation-state are many. They include manpower to fight the war, industrial facilities capable of producing the weapons and machine of war, intellectual resource to conduct research and development of new weapons and technology for war, political resources to gain and maintain the support of the people, diplomatic resources to gain and maintain alliances, financial and economic resources to raise the money necessary to pay for war, moral resources to sustain the will of the people, psychological resources to undermine the will of the enemy, and all the other tangible and intangible resources required to conduct war.

²⁰ Charles Kirkpatrick, *An Unknown Future and Doubtful Present* (Wash. DC: U.S.A. CMH, 1990), 78, 102, 104.

On the spectrum of war, from total to limited, Clausewitz argued that the level of the commitment of resources is determined by political objectives. He wrote: “The political objective—the original motive for the war—will thus determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires.”²¹ He continued: “We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means.”²² And that: “The degree of force that must be used against the enemy depends on the scale of political demands on either side. These demands, so far as they are known, would show what effort each must make; but they seldom are fully known—which may be on reason why both sides do not exert themselves to the same degree.”²³ *Political objectives* are derived from *policies* that are established by political leaders, and ideally reflect the values, ethics, and beliefs of the people. Political objective determine the amount of effort and source to commit. (This is discussed more fully in the following pages.)

However, Clausewitz has provided only a partial explanation. Hate, anger, honor, glory, and other human emotions and feeling, that are irrational, also drive the intensity of war. Military forces, their operational and tactical doctrine and desire to prove themselves, and weapon system, the desire to demonstrate their effectiveness and usefulness, also drive the intensity of war. Culture is also part of the equation.

Trinity of War The trinity of war is the *people*, *government*, and *armed forces*. As noted above, only nation-states can fight wars near the total end of the spectrum, because such wars require the support of the people. Consensus, unity, cooperation, and some minimal degree of harmony between the *people*, the *government*, and the *armed forces*, must exist to fight war near

²¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 81.

²² Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.

²³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 585

the total end of the spectrum. Unity and harmony make it possible to direct and focus the resources and energy of the nation-state on targeted political objectives. Clausewitz wrote: “As a total phenomenon its [war’s] dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity—composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as the blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.” He clarified these words: “The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.”²⁴

With the “paradoxical trinity” Clausewitz identified the requirement to fight absolute war, total war. To fight a total war, in addition to the government and the armed forces, which are required to fight any war, the willing support of the people is also a prerequisite. *This tenet of Clausewitz’ theory can be extended to include major, protracted limited wars.* While a nation with the power and resource of the United States can carryout small wars in a foreign land, for example, Central or South American, for an indefinite period of time without the resources, attention, and time of the American people, a major limited war across the Pacific or Atlantic requires enormous resources and hence, at least some degree of support form the American people. The more total the war, the greater the requirement for the support of the people. The more limited the war, the lower the requirement for the support of the people. The trinity also helps to understand how to lose a war: destroy the enemy’s main forces, destroy the will of its

²⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

people, or destroy the government. It is argued that during the Vietnam War the will of the American people was destroyed. The Armed Forces of the United States were not defeated on the fields of battle, and the government of the United States was not destroyed. What ultimately collapsed was the will of the people.

Policy and Political Objectives Ideology influences the policies and political objectives of nation-state. National Socialist ideology was translated into policies, such as Lebensraum, living-space for the German speaking people, the policies toward the treatment of Jews. Policies are then translated into political objectives. Policies are broad statements of the national will and purpose. Policies, to be effective, require the support of the people. Policies ought to reflect their values, ethics, and beliefs. Policies are to some degree a reflection of history and culture. In August 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and in cooperation with Prime Minister Winston Churchill in a document titled, *The Atlantic Charter*, endeavored to delineate the policies of the United States and the United Kingdom. In part they wrote:

The President of the United States... and the Prime Minister... representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world [which can only be attained through war].

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other.

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.

Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.

Fourth, they will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity.

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement, and social security.

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans with hindrance.

Eight, they believe that all the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained in land, sea, or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontier, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.²⁵

The Atlantic Charter held considerable cultural contents. The ideas of the American Revolution were well represented. It delineated principles, values, ethics, and beliefs that the vast majority of Americans would have supported. However, much of it was a façade constructed to appeal to people in all parts of the world, a pretense to universal principles that were not universally practiced. For example, the British had no intent of allowing the people of India or Hong Kong “to choose the form of government under which they will live.” And “freedom and fear from want” were *not* extended to non-white Europeans in the vast Western Empires and homelands. The Atlantic Charter if practiced universally would have led to the destruction of the British Empire and American Empires, and end to Jim Crowism in the United States. While recognizing the much of this document was façade, applicable only to Western democracies, it nevertheless, held “universal concept” with which most American would have agreed. And the objective was to tell the American people the *policies* of their government that made war

²⁵ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: The Grand Alliance*, 443, 444.

necessary. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, before a Congressional declaration of war, the President had committed the United States to “the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny.” This was an absolute objective, which called for the commitment of vast resources, total war. *The destruction of any government is an absolute political objective.* Finally, the Charter held content that most Americans would not have agreed: “they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential.” This was interpreted by Churchill to mean that the U.S. and U.K. would police the post-war world. Americans did not, at least initially, agree to this. However, this appears to be what we are doing.

Strategy Consider the following definitions of strategy starting with Clausewitz:

The conduct of war... consists in the planning and conduct of fighting... [Fighting] consists of a greater or lesser number of single *acts, each complete in itself*, which... are called “engagements” and which form new entities. This gives rise to the completely different activity of *planning and executing these engagements themselves*, and of coordinating each of them with the others in order to further the object of the war. One has been called *tactics*, and the other *strategy*.... According to our classification, then, tactics teaches *the use of armed forces in the engagement*; strategy, *the use of engagements for the object of the war.*²⁶

The strategist must therefore define an aim for the entire operational side of the war that will be in accordance with its purpose. In other words, he will draft the plans of war, and the aim will determine the series of actions intended to achieve it: he will, in fact, shape the individual campaigns and within these, decide on the individual engagements.²⁷

Clausewitz expands on this definition by recognizing the elements of strategy: “The strategic elements that affect the use of engagements may be classified into various types: moral, physical, mathematical, geographical, and statistical.” He explained in more precise terms what each of these elements is:

The first type covers everything that is created by intellectual and psychological qualities and influences; the second consists of the size of armed forces, their composition,

²⁶ Clausewitz, 128.

²⁷ Clausewitz, 177.

armament and so forth; the third includes the angle of lines of operations, the convergent and divergent movements wherever geometry enters into their calculation; and fourth comprises the influence of terrain, such as commanding positions, mountains, rivers, woods, and roads; and finally, the fifth covers support and maintenance.... It would... be disastrous to try to develop our understanding of strategy by analyzing these factors in isolation, since they are usually interconnected in each military action in manifold and intricate ways.²⁸

In his work *The Art of War*, Baron de Jomini defined strategy and placed it in context of tactics, and logistics.²⁹

Strategy is the art of making war upon the map, and comprehends the whole theater of operations. Grand tactics is the art of posting troops upon the battlefield according to the accidents of the ground, of bringing them into action, and the art of fighting upon the ground, in contradistinction to planning upon a map. Its operations may extend over a field of ten or twelve miles in extent. Logistics comprises the means and arrangements which work out the plans of strategy and tactics. Strategy decides where to act; logistics brings the troops to this point; grand tactics decides the manner of execution and the employment of the troops.³⁰

It is important to take into consideration when Clausewitz and Jomini were writing. They were the first to witness the revolution in warfare and the new scale of war cause by the French Revolution, which created the nation in arms and move the world towards more total war end of the spectrum. The wars of Napoleon were the first great wars in this new era. Jomini sought to identify the key to Napoleon's success in war, to reveal the unchanging principles of war. He wrote: "That strategy is the key to warfare; That all strategy is controlled by invariable scientific principles; and That these principles prescribe *offensive action to mass forces* against weaker enemy forces at some *decisive point* if strategy is to lead to victory."³¹

The new scale of war created the operational level of war. Prior the French Revolution, there were two levels of war, the strategic and tactical. Jomini's consideration of space is

²⁸ Clausewitz, 183.

²⁹ For the best summary of the work of Jomini see, John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, edited Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986. Shy wrote: "Jomini remembered that it was the exploits of the French Army of Italy under General Bonaparte in 1796-1797 that had made him a military theorist (147)." While Clausewitz has been well studied, Jomini has received relatively little attention from scholars and the military.

³⁰ Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini, *The Art of War* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), 69.

³¹ John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 146

revealing. “Ten to twelve miles” is a single battlefield using twentieth century technology, essentially, the tactical level of war. Clausewitz and Jomini could not have envisioned a war such as World War II, where operations were global in scale, where the industrial revolution, population explosion, and advances in technology greatly expanded and intensified the speed of war, the reach of war, the consumption of resources, and the process of killing. The Central Pacific Theater, for example, covered more than nine thousand miles of oceans. What was the strategic level of war for Clausewitz and Jomini in some ways resemble the operational level of war in the 20th century. Still their work and definitions are valuable.

Strategy is a specific type of plan. Clausewitz also informs us that the purpose of the plan is to achieve political objectives, “the objective of war.” Consider the descriptions of and distinctions between strategy and tactics used to educate cadets at West Point:

1. Strategy brings the troops to the battlefield; tactics directs their action thereon.
2. Strategy is the art of moving or disposing military resources, so as to impose upon the enemy the place and time and conditions for fighting preferring by oneself. Tactics is the moving of military resources in actual contact with the enemy.
3. Viewed from the standpoint of ends and means, strategy and tactics assume varying proposition:
 - a. Tactics wins battles; battles win the war and this is strategy.
 - b. Tactics is the theory of the use of military force in combat; strategy is the theory of the use of combats for the object of the war.

Edward Mead Earle an edited book titled, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, published in 1943, advanced the idea that strategy had change since the days of Clausewitz and Jomini. He wrote: “Until about the end of eighteenth century strategy consisted of the body of stratagems and tricks of war—*ruses de guerre*—by which a general sought to deceive the enemy and win victory. But as war and society have become more complicated—and war, it must be remembered, is an inherent part of society—strategy has of necessity required increasing consideration of

nonmilitary factors, economic, psychological, moral, political, and technological.” Earle defined strategy as follows:

In the present-day world, then, strategy is the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation—or a coalition of nations—including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured against enemies, actual, potential, or merely presumed. The highest type of strategy—sometimes called grand strategy—is that which so integrates the policies and armaments of the nation that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory.³²

Sir Basil Liddell Hart in his book *Strategy* advanced the idea that the purpose of war is a “better peace.” He concluded that “it is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire.” He also expanded on the concept of grand strategy:

Grand Strategy should both calculate and develop the economic resources and manpower of nations in order to sustain the fighting services. Also the moral resources—for to foster the people’s willing spirit is often as important as to possess the more concrete forms of power. Grand Strategy, too, should regulate the distribution of power between the several services, and between the services and industry. Moreover, fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy—which should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, of diplomatic pressure, of commercial pressure, and, not least of ethical pressure, to weaken the opponent’s will.... It should not only combine the various instruments, but so regulate their use as to avoid damage to the future state of peace—for its security and prosperity.³³

Paul Kennedy in and edited book titled, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, published in 1991, wrote:

The crux of grand strategy lies therefore in policy, that is, in the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and nonmilitary, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term (that is, in wartime and peacetime) best interests. Such an endeavor is full of imponderables and unforeseen “friction.” It is not a mathematical science in the Jominian tradition, but an art in the Clausewitzian sense sense—and a difficult art at that, since it operates at various levels, political, strategic, operational, tactical, and interacting with each other to advance (or retard) the primary aim.

Department of Defense (DOD) dictionary provides a joint definition, meaning it is applicable to all the services, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. The DOD dictionary defines

³² Edward Mead Earle, edited, *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton University Press, 1943), viii.

³³ Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd revised edition, (NY: 1974), 322, 353-357.

“strategy” as, “the art and science of developing and employing instrument of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objective.” The DOD dictionary also recognizes the several levels of strategy, starting at lowest level, *theater strategy*, *national military strategy*, *national strategy*, and *national security strategy*. Theater strategy is “the art and science of developing integrated strategic concepts and courses of action directed toward securing the objectives of national and alliance or coalition security policy and strategy by use of force, threatened use of force, or operations not involving the use of force within a theater.” National military strategy is defined as, “the art and science of distributing and applying military power to attain national objectives in peace and war.” The “National Military Strategy,” (NMS), is updated and published periodically by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, usually in concert with service Chiefs of Staff, who are also member of the JSC. The US NMS guides the Armed Forces in employing their resources in the most effective manner to achieve national security objectives.³⁴

National strategy is defined as, “the art and science of developing and using the diplomatic, economic, and informational powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war to secure national objectives.” Finally, national security strategy is defined as, “the art and science of developing, applying, and coordinating the instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic, military, and informational) to achieve objectives that contribute to national security.” The latter two can be considered “grand strategy.” The National Security Council NSC, whose members include the President, who is chair, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Director of CIA, Chairman of JCS, and other Presidential appointed members, formulates and disseminates policy, national strategic doctrine, and national strategy.

³⁴ Joint Publication 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, 14 November 2000, IV-3.

National Security Strategy (NSS) and NSC documents delineate U.S. policies, strategy, and strategic doctrine. The NSC policies and NSS directly influence NMS.

Given this wide range of definitions what is most useful in analyzing war? There are three major components of strategy are: objectives, resources, and plans. Objectives what is sought, at the strategic level through war, at the operational level through the employment of military forces, at the tactical level through battle. Resources: what is available at the various level of war to achieve objectives. Resources are never fixed. They are also in a state of transition and they are not all tangible. The final element is a plan that links resources to the achievement of objectives. Strategy is thus: a *plan* to use the *resources* of a nation-state to achieve *political objectives*. The plan can be based on the art and science of war. Strategy can be restated to fit the appropriate level of war, for example, strategy is the operational plan to use military forces to achieve military objective in a specific theater of war. The achievement of operational objectives contributes to the achievement of the larger political objectives.

Clausewitz, Earle, Hart, and Kennedy emphasize that strategy formulation is a comprehensive *art*. However, Americans culturally are more influenced by *science* than *art*. Americans tend be more Jominian than Clausewitzian. Americans also prefer to work with the tangible as opposed to the intangible. Hence, American political and military leadership tend to ignore the will of the people, the psychological dimensions of war, the cultural dimension of war, and the ethical and moral dimension of war. American leadership tends to focus on the material and technological dimension of war. From World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom, American military and political leadership, with few exceptions, has sought to achieve victory with either overwhelming force or through the employment of advanced technology, or some combination of the two. The American military structure ignores military genius. It produces technicians and

managers. The American vision of war is too narrow; as a consequence, we make stupid mistakes such as the invasion of Iraq. The invaders were ignorant of the culture of the people. They did not understand the dynamics of the region. Osama Bin Laden was better at achieving his political objectives of getting the United States to over extend itself than the Bush Administration, which blundered into Bin Laden's *ruses de guerre*. The financial crisis that so damaged the American economy in last year of the Bush Administration was caused, at least in part, by the war in Iraq, which has extracted almost a trillion dollar from Americans, and created an enormous national debt. War, the economy, and will of the people are intricately related. When war is narrowly defined as simply a military conflict mistakes such as Operation Iraqi Freedom occur.

The Center of Gravity Modern nation-states have vast resources; however, they could easily be dispersed around the planet failing to achieve political objectives. To preclude this, a government and its armed forces need to determine where to focus their resources. The objective of this analytical process is to determine what is decisive. What can be attack to cause the decisive defeat of the enemy in the least amount of time with the lowest expenditure of resources, and with the least damage to oneself? Whatever that is, is the *Strategic Center of Gravity*. Clausewitz wrote:

What the theorist has to say here is this: one must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain *center of gravity* develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed.... Basing our comments on general experience, the acts we consider most important for the defeat of the enemy are the following:

1. Destruction of his army, if it is at all significant
2. Seizure of his capitol if it is not only the center of administration but also that of social, professional, and political activity [or the destruction of the government]

3. Delivery of an effective blow against his principal ally if that ally is more powerful than he.³⁵

Clausewitz did not provide an easy answer as to how to determine the enemy's center of gravity. This requires study, knowledge, and understanding, including cultural understanding.

Consider the following analysis:

For Alexander, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII, and Frederick the Great, the center of gravity was their army. If the army had been destroyed, they would all have gone down in history as failures. In countries subject to domestic strife, the center of gravity is generally the capital. In small countries that rely on large ones, it is usually the army of their protector. Among alliances, it lies in the community of interests, and in popular uprisings it is the personalities of the leaders and public opinion [the will of the people]. It is against these that our energies should be directed.³⁶

At the strategic level of war there are typically three centers of gravity, the *armed forces*, the *government*, and the *will of the people*. In most wars the destruction of any one of these elements produces victory. However, in coalition warfare, the disunity of the coalition may prove decisive. In people's wars and/or insurgency wars the destruction of the enemy's main army, and "a country's total occupation may not be enough." The will of the people may still preclude victory. Until the people accept the verdict of the battlefield the war is not over, and military victory is only a temporary facade. In World War II, the Allies focused on the destruction of the German armed forces. The destruction of the German Army made possible the destruction of the Nazi government. The people of Germany, having witnessed and experienced the awesome size and destructive power of Allied forces, accepted the verdict of the battlefield and the resultant destruction of the Nazi government. The *Wehrmacht* was the center of gravity. In Vietnam, after the Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese focused on the destruction of the will of the American people. In Vietnam the Armed Forces of the United States were not destroyed. The government of the United States, while damaged, was also not destroyed. What caused America's defeat in

³⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 595, 596.

³⁶ Clausewitz, 596.

Vietnam was not in Vietnam, it was in the United States, the will of the American people. (Of course, it was the government's responsibility to maintain the support of the people, and it failed to do so.) The center of gravity, as Clausewitz noted, may rest in the strength of the alliance. The American people had little affinity and no cultural attachments to the people of South Vietnam. In Iraq the objective of the insurgency is the destruction of the American established government. One way to achieve that is to destroy the will of the American people. The American sponsored government in Iraq probably cannot survive without the support of the United States. And the government of the United States cannot indefinitely maintain the vast expenditure of resources to Iraq without the support of the American people. Thus, the objective of the insurgents in Iraq is not the destruction of American armed forces or government. They well recognize that both are beyond their means. The other potential centers of gravity in Iraq are the will of the Iraqi people, and the cultural, religious, ethnic, and political divisions that separate the Sunni, Shia, and Kurds. If the war becomes a civil war, the position of the United States may become untenable. In a population of 25 million people the U.S. Army and Marine Corps could not maintain security. In the process of the developing strategy the center of gravity must be determined, and resources focused on its destruction.

The strategic center of gravity is sometime difficult to discern. In the battle of the Atlantic the Germans developed "Tonnage Strategy," which focused their U-boats on the destruction of British and American merchant fleets. The merchant fleet was considered an operational center of gravity; however, the strategic centers of gravity were the Armed Forces of the U.K. and U.S., and the will of the British people, which were dependent of the materials delivered from the United States. In the American Revolution it can be argued that George Washington's Army was the center of gravity; however, it never numbered over thirty-thousand

men at any given time, and had it suffered 50 percent casualties, which is considered combat ineffective, the war would have continued. The strategic center of gravity was not Washington's Army it was the will of the people, which without doubt was greatly influenced by the successes and failures of the Army. Hence, it was possible for the defeat of the Army to cause the destruction of the will of the people. However, it was also possible for the defeat of the Army to produce the motivation to raise a larger, stronger Army.

Leadership might also be the center of gravity, battlefield leadership and/or political leadership. Washington, Lincoln, Churchill, Napoleon, Hitler, and other great leaders have made decisive differences in the outcome of war, and not always a positive difference. Obviously, considerable knowledge of the enemy is required determine his strategic center of gravity. Still, by pushing analysis of war to the bottom line, it is revealed that the strategic centers of gravity are primarily the will of the people, the government, and/or the armed forces.

The Offensive and Defensive Forms of War There are two basic forms of war offensive and defensive. The three basic types of strategy: exhaustion, attrition, and annihilation. The strategic defense is the strongest form of war; however to achieve decisive result a force must at some point pass over to the offense. Clausewitz wrote: *“Defense, as we see it, is nothing but the strongest form of combat. The preservation of one’s fighting forces and the destruction of the enemy’s—in a word, victory—is the substance of this struggle; but it can never be its ultimate object. The ultimate object is the preservation of one’s own state and the defeat of the enemy’s; again in brief, the intended peace treaty, which will resolve the conflict and result in a common settlement.”*³⁷

³⁷ Clausewitz, 484.

While on the strategic defense it is possible to preserve one's armed forces and state. However, to achieve a decisive victory strategically offensive operations are, as a rule, necessary. On the defense, as a rule, it is only possible to not lose a war. It is not possible through negative actions to win a war. There are exceptions. On the defense it is possible to win by punishing the invading forces so severely that their political leaders surrender, without being invaded, positive actions. However, this is not the norm, particularly if the very survival of the government is in question. As a rule, it takes strategically offensive operations, to convince a nation-state to surrender, or acquiesce to political demands. Clausewitz explained:

In war, the subjugation of the enemy is the end, and the destruction of his fighting forces the means. That applies to attack and defense alike. By means of the destruction of the enemy's forces defense leads to attack, which in turn leads to the conquest of the country. That, then is the objective, but it need not be the whole country; it may be limited to a part—a province, a strip of territory, a fortress, and so forth. Any one of these may be of political value in negotiations, whether they are retained or exchanged.

The object of strategic attack, therefore, may be thought of in numerous gradations, from the conquest of a whole country to that of an insignificant hamlet. As soon as the objective has been attained the attack ends and the defense takes over. One might therefore think of a strategic attack as an entity with well-defined limits.³⁸

The defense is the strongest form of war for multiple reasons. It is argued that it take a three to one advantage to overcome a defense; therefore, the defender requires fewer forces at the point of contact. The defender has the advantage of knowledge of the terrain, and stable, relatively secure positions from which to engage the attackers. It has the advantage of well developed transportation arteries to sustain its forces. The attacker has the initiative, but also has to project power forward beyond his border. This requires significant planning and resources. It requires movement plans, the establishment of secure lines of communication, through which supplies, provisions, and ammunition can flow. It requires significant transportation resources, e.g., trucks, ships, and airplanes, significant logistical capabilities, the buildup and positioning of

³⁸ Clausewitz, 526.

supplies, the establishment of relationships with foreign countries for the rights of passage, which may not be granted, and numerous other resources. However, the major advantage of the defense is psychological, the will of the people. People fight harder when invaded. People fight harder and more tenaciously when the enemy is in their homeland, and the safety of their loved ones, their spouse and children are directly threatened with violence. This alone creates sufficient motivation for most people to fight.

The Levels of War As note earlier, there are three levels of war, the *strategic*, *operational*, and *tactical*. Tactics is the art and science of applying combat arms—infantry, armor, artillery, air support, and other arms—to destroy enemy forces. *Battles* take place at the tactical level of war. Battles consist of series of firefights and movements all directed towards a common objective. Firefights are direct engagement between opposing small combat units. This is where the killing takes place. Each firefight, ideally, is part of a coherent battle plan. A series of coherent, successful firefights produces victory in battle. The battle for Omaha Beach took place over a seven mile front. It was composed of literally hundreds of firefights of various sizes. Firefights are conducted by squads, platoons, and companies. The battle was fought—orchestrated, commanded, and directed—by the Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division, Major General Clarence Huebner. The division is the largest unit in an army trained to fight as a team. Division, brigades, regiments, and battalion fight battles. The commanders of these units assist the CG in orchestrating the battle by maneuvering their forces to engage the enemy in accordance with the CG's maneuver plan and concept for the conduct of the battle.

At the operational level of war the *campaign* takes place. A campaign is a series of coherent battles and movements directed at achieving strategically important military objectives, in a specified geographic location. In modern war numerous campaigns typically take place

simultaneously within a theater of war. The Normandy invasion was a *campaign* that comprised a series of battle across a sixty mile front. Five divisions—two American, two British, and one Canadian—made the initial assault. In addition, three airborne divisions, two American and one British took part in the initial campaign. British and American air and naval fleets also took part in the campaign. The campaign was under the command of General Bernard Montgomery, the senior operational commander. While each division fought its own battle for beaches, they were all part of a single, coherent campaign plan. The objective of the offensive campaign was of strategic importance, the establishment of a beachhead large enough to receive follow-on divisions a rate faster than the enemy could buildup his forces.

The Normandy campaign was one in a series of campaigns that made up the war in the Western European Theater of Operations (ETO). General Dwight D. Eisenhower was the theater commander. He was responsible for fighting and winning the war in ETO. All forces, ground, air, and naval were supposedly under his command or control. In the ETO the British 21st Army Group under Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, the U.S. 12th Army Group under the command of Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, and the U.S. 6th Army Group under the command of Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers conducted independent, though related, campaigns, all under the command of Eisenhower. To decisively win a war strategically important, offensive campaigns have to take place. In addition to the land campaign, the war in the ETO included air campaigns to dominate the air space over the battlefields, to destroy the enemy's means of production, and to destroy the will of the people. It also included the naval campaign to protect and deliver the invasion forces into the continent, and to dominate the seas around the battlefields.

Within a strategically defensive war, it is possible to conduct offensive and defensive campaigns and battles. Within a strategically offensive war it is possible to conduct defensive and offensive campaigns and battles. Traditional thinking advances the following connections: if small units win most or all the firefights then they win the battle. If larger units win most or all their battles then they win the campaign. If armies win most or all of their campaigns then they win the war. This thinking, however, is more appropriate for conventional wars and insurgency war. Consider the three levels of war from another perspective. During the Civil War, the Confederate States of American (CSA) fought a *strategically defensive war*. The defense is the strongest form of war; hence, the weaker side should initially assume to defense. While the CSA were on the strategic defense, in September 1862, Robert E. Lee with his Army of North Virginia conducted an *offensive campaign*. He invaded Maryland with the intent to achieve strategically important objectives, to get Maryland, a slave holding state, to join the CSA, and to possibly gain diplomatic recognition of the CSA from Britain and France. Hence, while the CAS was strategic on the defense, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia fought an offensive campaign that had the potential to be of strategic importance. Had Maryland joined the CSA, Washington would have been surrounded. Had Britain and France recognized the CSA the war would have been transformed from a civil war, to a war between two independent states, each of which had the right to acquire allies and their assistance. At a place called Antietam Creek, Lee's Army fought the U.S. Army, under the command of General George B. McClellan. On this terrain, Lee fought a *tactically defensive battle*. The U.S. Army fought a tactically offensive battle. Hence, while the CSA was on the *strategic defense*, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia conducted an *offensive campaign*, invading Maryland, and at Antietam, Lee fought a *tactically defensive battle*.

Geography and Terrain. Geography and terrain are of strategic importance influencing the conduct and outcome of war. It is impossible to study and analyze war without some knowledge of the geography and terrain on which the campaigns and battles were fought, or will be fought. Geography influences theater strategy. Terrain influences operations and tactics.

Knowledge of geography is required to develop strategy. Strategy, for example, has to take into consideration the surrounding countries, whether they are friend, foe, or neutral, whether their air and ground space can be used and/or traversed, whether they provide sanctuaries for the enemy, and whether they are a source of men and material and other resources for the enemy. Geography, thus, establishes the boundaries of the battlefields, and sets limits on military operations. It determines the lines of communication, through which men and material flow, the modes and types of transportation necessary. It provides knowledge about the types, quality, and quantity of forces and supplies required to conduct operations in given region of the Earth. It influence the ways in which battles are fought, the axes of advance, and the training of leadership and soldiers. It influences technology and doctrine. It provides knowledge about the enemy's ability to maneuver, avoid and initiate battle, reinforce, re-supply, retreat, and expand operations within the theater of war. Geography also has a psychological effect. Geography influences the will of the people. The closer battlefields are to homelands, the more tenaciously a people fight. The defense is the strongest form of war, in part, because people fight harder to protect their homes than they do to conquer someone else's home.

In addition, if we seek to know our enemy, we must understand how geography has shaped their way of life and culture. Geography shapes people in many significant ways. It influences how they see the world. For example, the proximity to significant enemies or potential enemies influences culture. The security provided by two great oceans made it possible for

Americans to complete their conquest of the North American continent uninterrupted by significant powers. The Pacific and Atlantic made large standing armies unnecessary. The energies and talents of the American people could be directed towards other, more profitable endeavors. The German speaking people of Central Europe, however, throughout most of their history, have found it necessary to devote enormous resources and energy to security. The proximity to powerful enemies such as France and Russia directly influence the live of the German speaking people of Central Europe. Resources had to be rationalized to maintain significant standing armies. There was no abundance of land, and every man was in some way a soldier, responsible for the security of the state. Prussia-German, because of its geographic circumstance was also influenced by Western and Eastern European culture. Consider the word

Hans Rosenburg:

The Hohenzollern monarchy, by virtue of its geographic location and social fabric, was linked both to western and eastern Europe. The culture which previously had evolved in northern Germany was firmly rooted in the Western tradition.... Some influences, such as the role of peasant serfdom, the caste system in the ownership of land, and the stiffening of seigniorial lordship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, set Prussia off from Western Europe.

Frederick William I created a first-rate army which had to be supported by a country which was third-rate in terms of manpower, natural wealth, capital supply, and economic skills. The existence of a large standing army had consequence for Prussia different from those for the other absolute monarchies. Around 1800, the enlightened Minister von Schrotter, a former professional soldier, summed up the peculiarity of the polity of the Hohenzollerns: "Prussia was not a country with an army, but an army with a country which served as headquarters and food magazine."

The Prussian experiment in royal monarchy resulted in the excessive militarization of society.... Stiffly martial concepts of authority and of military virtues were established as the models for peacetime civil government and for civil life in general. Closely tied to peasant bondage and to harsh local Junker rule, the Prussian military images exerted a harmful influence upon social ideals and political attitudes. They fostered a hideous spirit of fearful obedience to authority which, under the conditions of the nineteenth century, made for a deplorable lack of Zivilcourage and, in the Second Reich, for the inner surrender of most civilians to military fetishism. Prussia-Germany evolved into the most

militaristic country of modern times because of forces that originated in the regimes of Frederick William I and Frederick II.³⁹

Geography greatly influenced German culture. The extent of that influence and the many ways in which it was manifested is debatable. Having powerful, potentially hostile states on all sides, created enormous security demands, which required a substantial military structure, which, in turn, placed heavy demands on the people forming in some ways their outlook, thinking, and attitudes towards the world around them. While Rosenberg carries his argument a bit too far, it is a fact, that the strategic culture of Prussia-Germany was in part determined by geography and the history of war in the region. Britain, an island nation-state, developed a strategic culture based on sea power. Sea power made possible for the British Empire to expand into all corners of the Earth. Seapower greatly influenced the British way of war, way of life, and approach to other cultures, particularly non-Western peoples.

Geography also greatly influences military operations. In the Central Pacific in Marine Corps and Navy had to develop amphibious warfare doctrine to breach the Japanese island strongholds. However, the dominance of the Navy dictated the outcome of battles from November 1943, the invasion at Tarawa, until the end of the war. The ability of the Navy to isolate islands, to preclude Japanese reinforcement, re-supply, and retreat made the outcome of the battles inevitable.

Terrain influences the ability of an army to generate combat power by affecting the movement of forces around the battlefield and the flow of battle across it. Terrain dictates the types of force, doctrine, tactics, and weapons employed to destroy enemy forces in direct engagements. Clausewitz who witnessed and studied the first modern “People’s War” during the

³⁹ Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy Aristocracy and Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1958), 22, 40, 41

French occupation of Spain in the Napoleonic era concluded that the following conditions were required to carry out a people's war, a "revolutionary war:"

1. The war must be fought in the interior of the country [a geographic consideration].
2. It must not be decided by a single stroke.
3. The theater of operations must be fairly large. [a geographic consideration].
4. The national character must be suited to that type of war [a consideration of human terrain].
5. The country must be rough and inaccessible, because of mountains, or forests, marshes, or the local methods of cultivation [considerations of terrain].⁴⁰

Combat Power and the Culminating Point To conduct an attack or to defend against one requires *combat power*. *Combat power* is an intangible. It is the force, the destructive energy, generated by armed forces in combat. Clausewitz, used the term "force" to indicate combat power. He wrote: "If we remember how many factors contribute to an equation of *force*, we will understand how difficult it is in some cases to determine which side has the upper hand." Combat power is a function the combination of resources. It is an abstraction that represents the total output of energy a unit is capable of producing in combat at given place and time. The factors that produce combat are many and they are always changing; hence, in relatively short periods of time the flow of battle can change. Commanders in battle must constantly reassess *relative combat power*. Combat power is a function of weapons, men, leadership, technology, doctrine, training, education, professionalism, skill, talent, experience, terrain, geography, logistics, morale, the physical capabilities of soldiers, intelligence, courage, genius, weather, mobility, speed of decision making, speed in maneuver, communications, climate, time and numerous other factors. Items as small and as simple as shoes or the weight of ammunition can affect the combat power a unit is capable of generating. Ideally the mix of resources will produce synergy; that is, combat power greater than the sum of the individual parts.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 480.

Terrain and geography greatly influence the production of combat power. Forces are designed to fight on specific types of terrain. Heavy mechanized infantry and armor divisions are designed to fight on the plains of Europe or the deserts of Middle East. This is where they generate the greatest combat power. Air Assault divisions, which possess superior operational and tactical mobility because of the helicopter, are designed to fight in the jungles of Vietnam or the forest of Central and South America. Light infantry division can generate significant combat power in cities, urban terrain, and in jungle and mountainous terrain. However, in open desert they can produce little combat power, and are limited to the speed at which they can march. Service culture influences combat power. The U.S. Army endeavors to maintain forces capable of fighting in all the terrain. However, it can generate considerably less combat power in jungle terrain than it can in the open terrain of Europe or the Middle East. The movement to and conduct of battle expends combat power. Consider the following analysis:

Success in attack results from the availability of superior strength [combat power], including of course both physical and moral.... [T]he force of an attack gradually diminishes; it is possible in the course of the attack for superiority to increase, but usually it will be reduced. The attacker is purchasing advantages that may become valuable at the peace table, but he must pay for them on the spot with his fighting forces. If the superior strength of the attack—which diminishes day by day—leads to peace, the object will have been attained.

There are strategic attacks that have led directly to peace, but these are the minority. Most of them only lead up to the point where their remaining strength is just enough to maintain a defense and wait for peace. Beyond that point the scale turns and the reaction follows with a force that is usually much stronger than that of the original attack. This is what we mean by the *culminating point* of the attack. Since the object of the attack is the possession of the enemy's territory, it follows that the advance will continue until the attacker's superiority is exhausted; it is this that drives the offensive on toward its goal and can easily drive it further.⁴¹

In strategically offensive operation combat power diminishes as forces advance into enemy homelands. *Strategic consumption* takes place with every mile advanced. In strategically

⁴¹ Clausewitz, 528.

offensive operations it is necessary to conserve sufficient combat power for the main engagements with the enemy's armed forces. In those engagements both sides will consume combat power at a relatively high rate. The side which reaches its peak output first, *the culminating point*, without having achieved its objectives will lose. At the tactical level of war the battle is lost. At the strategic level of war the war is lost. When commanders reach the culmination point and they have not achieved a decision, they should either find means to increase their combat power, or disengage before their forces are completely destroyed, or go over to the defense, if it is tenable, to conserve their forces until the equation of combat power can be redressed. *The culminating point* is the utmost output in combat power a given force engaged in combat on a specific piece of terrain at a given period of time can generate. If the strategic objective is not achieved when the culminating point is reached, success is not possible, unless the enemy collapse because of some internal failure. In the aftermath of World War I the German Army concluded it had not been defeated on the fields of battle, but undermined on the home front. It is difficult to discern the culminating point of enemy forces. While a commander well understands his own capabilities for generating combat power, the enemy's ability to produce combat power is only partially known. And through deception a commander can create the appearance of greater combat power than he actually possesses.

Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia and the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 are the most outstanding examples of these tenets. Napoleon's *Grande Armee*, which initiated the campaign with roughly 600,000 men in June, was reduced to no more than 95,000 combat effective soldiers on 14 September, when Napoleon entered Moscow. The *Grande Armee* fought a series of inconclusive battles that degrade its combat power. Napoleon's combat power diminished with each engagement and each mile it advanced. Strategic consumption destroyed

his chance for victory. In addition, roughly 130,000 of Napoleon's soldiers were committed to securing the French supply lines (lines of communication), and fighting minor, but significant, engagements to secure the flanks of the Army. The Russians employed a scorched-earth, defensive, war of attrition, strategy. They employed defend and delay operations and tactics refusing to give Napoleon the decisive battle he needed to achieve his objectives. Geography and terrain favored the Russian defensive strategy, allowing them to trade space for time. While the Russian Army fought significant, bloody battles they were always able to disengage and lived to fight another day secure in the knowledge that time favored the defenders, and that the deeper Napoleon advanced into Russia the less combat power his army could muster. The culminating point of campaign was reached before the decisive battle was fought.

In 1941, the Germans repeated Napoleon's strategic blunder. Lee's invasion of the North in 1893, the Gettysburg Campaign, was also major, strategic blunders. In the face of numerically superior force he struck deep into enemy territory. With each mile his combat power diminished. When the battles at Gettysburg reached its culminating point Lee had not achieved his objectives and had insufficient resources to change the combat equation, the force ratio. He was thus forced to withdraw. The complexity of these operations cannot be reduced to a single paragraph, nevertheless, the usefulness of the analytical tools *combat power*, *culminating point*, *strategic consumption*, and *strategy* is evident in these campaigns.

Doctrine. Strategic, operational, and/or tactical doctrines can make a decisive difference in war. Doctrine is the authoritative, fundamental principles that guide of conduct of the military operations, of a specific force, towards the achievement of military objectives, and ultimately

political objectives.⁴² The term “doctrine” used alone means “operational doctrine;” however, strategic and tactical doctrines also influence the conduct of war at their respective levels. How armed forces want to fight is doctrine. How armies, navies, and air forces intend to employ their forces, men and technology, in battle to achieve military objectives is doctrine. Doctrine is a function of technology, cultural predilections and biases, military tradition, geopolitical circumstance, significant historical and recent military experiences, the permissiveness of the command climate (some organizations suppress their innovative thinkers), and the qualities and intelligence of leadership. Significant new technologies have traditionally produced new ways of thinking about war, and ultimately new ways of fighting, new doctrines. The purpose of armed forces is to generate combat power, sufficient combat power to defeat known potential enemies. The purpose of doctrine, then, is to maximize the combat power generated by armed forces, against specific enemies, on specific geography and terrain, with given sets and systems of technology, and the cultural predispositions of the people. The driving force in the effort to develop new doctrines is the common sense desire to maximize the production of combat power, with the technology available. Any given weapons system has specific attributes, specific capabilities and weaknesses. The question then is: given these attributes, how can my army maximize the potential of this weapon to produce combat power against a given enemy.

In World War II the German's pioneered a new offensive operational maneuver warfare doctrine that became known as *Blitzkrieg*. This operational doctrine, in the view of many, explains the fall of France in the spring of 1940. General Heinz Guderian believed that the tank

⁴² Joint Publication 1, Joint Warfare, 2000, defined doctrine as follows: “Military doctrine presents fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces. Joint doctrine provides authoritative guidance, based upon extant capabilities of the Armed Forces of the United States. It incorporates time-tested principles for successful military action as well as contemporary lessons which together guide aggressive exploitation of US advantages against adversary vulnerabilities. Doctrine shapes the way the Armed Forces think about the use of the military instrument of national power.”

was the dominant weapon on the battlefield.⁴³ It had the attributes of speed, firepower, mobility, shock effect, and protection (survivability). When tanks were used *en masse*; that is, formed into armored divisions, which integrated mechanized infantry, artillery, and close air support, all connected by radio, they formed the decisive formation on the battlefield. It should be understood that it was not the tanks themselves that were decisive. It was the operational doctrine by which they were employed that made tanks decisive. The French and British had tanks, and even tank divisions; however, they were not organized, equipped, trained, and led to employ this new doctrinal thinking. After the fall of France the lessons were clear. The Russian, British, and Americans learned fast that the way to defeat a mass armor formation employing blitzkrieg operational doctrine is with another, preferably larger, faster, mass armor formation. The Russians created armor corps, organizations consisting of two or more armor divisions, to fight the Germans, and, after much hard learning, they were successful.

New doctrines, historical, have lagged behind the invention of new technologies. The tank was invented during World War I by the British. However, a doctrine to maximize its capabilities was not perfected until World War II. It frequently requires the incentive of war to produce new doctrines, and new technologies. In the post Vietnam War era the U.S. Army developed AirLand Battle *operational doctrine* specifically for the European battlefield. This doctrine would not have worked in environments such as the jungles of Vietnam or the mountains and rice fields of Korea. It was designed to operate with a new generation of Army technology—the M1 Abrams tank, M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, and AH64 Apache helicopter. This doctrine was successful employed, with modifications, in the Operation Desert Storm in Iraq. The biggest failure of the United States and its armed forces, since the final days of

⁴³ Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader* (NY: E. P. Dutton, n.d.), 39-46.

World War II when the U.S. became a superpower, is the development of *joint operational doctrine*.⁴⁴ The U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps have not been able to fight on the same battlefield with *synergy*. Not until the end of the century were significant efforts made to produce joint doctrine. During the Vietnam War, each service for the most part fought its own separate war, wasting enormous resources, and American lives. Doctrine is no small matter, and is the concern of the American people, who in one way or another pay for war.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency The U.S. Army FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency

Manual defines an insurgency as follows:

An insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control. Insurgencies normally seek to either overthrow the existing social order and reallocate power within the country, or to break away from state control and form an autonomous area. Insurgency is always a form of internal war....

[U.S.] Joint doctrine defines an *insurgency* as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. *Counterinsurgency* is those political, economic, military, paramilitary, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency.

Political power is the central issue in an insurgency, and each side has this as its aim. The insurgent attempts to overthrow or subvert an established government or authority; the counterinsurgent uses all of the instruments of national power to support the government in restoring and enforcing the rule of law. Counterinsurgency thus involves the controlled application of national power in political, information, economic, social, military, and diplomatic fields and disciplines.⁴⁵

Consider the definition advanced in *The War of the Flea*:

Insurgency—or internal war—is viewed as a general overarching concept that refers to a conflict between a government and an out group or opponent in which the latter uses both political resources and violence to change, reformulate, or uphold the legitimacy of one or more of four key aspects of politics. Those aspects are (1) the integrity of the borders and composition of the nation state, (2) the political system, (3) the authorities in power, and (4) the policies that determine who gets what in the society. The question is which ones are relevant in a particular case.

The author then identified various types of insurgencies:

⁴⁴ Joint Publication 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States, 14 November 2000.

⁴⁵ U.S. Army, Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency (Final Draft), June 2006, 1-1.

Some insurgents, like the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and the Polisario in Western Sahara, seek to separate from an existing nation state to create their own. Others, like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) or the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria, focus on replacing the political system and authorities with ones more to their liking. In what may seem counterintuitive, other insurgents, like the Ulster Defense Association in Northern Ireland, fight to sustain or preserve the four aspects of politics, especially the political system.⁴⁶

Obviously before a counterinsurgency strategy can be developed, knowledge of the type of insurgency being fought is absolutely necessary. Bernard B. Fall, in his book, *Last Reflections On A War*, endeavored to delineate the “The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency” warfare, and to define insurgency warfare.⁴⁷ He wrote:

One of the problems one immediately faces is that of terminology. Obviously “sublimated warfare” is meaningless, and “insurgency” or “counterinsurgency” hardly define the problem. But the definition that I think will fit the subject is “revolutionary warfare” (RW). Let me state this definition: RW=G+P, or “revolutionary warfare equals guerrilla warfare plus political action.” This formula for revolutionary warfare is the result of the application of guerrilla methods to the furtherance of an ideology or a political system.... The Communists, or shall we say, any sound revolutionary warfare operator... most of the time used small-war tactics, not to destroy the... Army, of which they were thoroughly incapable; but to establish a competitive system of control over the population. ...the military aspect, definitely always remained the minor aspect. The political, administrative, ideological aspect is the primary aspect.⁴⁸

One correction is necessary, in the final phase of the People’s Revolutionary War theory advanced by the Chinese Communist the military aspect becomes the primary aspect. Still, the people were the primary objective. Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Communist movement in Vietnam, regarding “armed propaganda” tactics wrote:

Politics is more important than military affairs. It is a propaganda unit. In order to operate effectively from a military standpoint, the primary principle is concentration of forces. Therefore, according to the new directive, cadres and determined, enthusiastic members will be selected from among the ranks of the Cao-Bac-Lang guerrilla units, which will be centralized into a large armed element. Because our resistance is one by all the people, it is necessary to mobilize and arm all of the people. With regard to local armed units: train

⁴⁶ Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2002), see “Foreword” by Bard E. O’Neill, xi.

⁴⁷ Professor of International Relations at Howard University and a life long student of Vietnam and insurgency war, lived in Vietnam for many years during its wars with the France and the United States and died there in 1967.

⁴⁸ Fall, “The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” *Naval War College Review*, 272.

local cadres who can in turn go to the localities and pass on their experiences, maintain clear communication and coordinate operations. With regard to tactics: fully employ the guerrilla tactics of secrecy, speed, activeness, mobility, stealth, and flexible maneuver. The Armed Propaganda Unit is a permanent military unit and it is hoped there will quickly be more of them. Although small in scope at the beginning, they have made brilliant progress so far. They are the starting point of the Liberation Army that will travel from North to South Vietnam and throughout the country.⁴⁹

While not a formal definition, Ho Chi Minh expressed his ideas on how the insurgency in Vietnam was to operate. Obviously there are a number of different ways to think about insurgency warfare. All of them acknowledge that the political task of winning the hearts and minds of the people is first and foremost in an insurgency-counterinsurgency war. An insurgency war is political, cultural, diplomatic, psychological, military, and economic war, all of which are related. Most students of insurgency wars emphasize the political task, and deemphasize the military task. At the same time they conclude that the U.S. failed in Vietnam because it placed too much emphasis on the military task and too little on the political task. In 1949 the Chinese Communist defeated the Nationalist using Mao's Protracted People's War of Attrition Revolutionary War strategy and doctrine. Consider the nature and totality of the revolution sought by the Chinese Communist:

The Chinese Revolution created a whole new vocabulary. A most important word in this vocabulary was fanshen. Literally, it means "to turn the body," or "to turn over." To China's hundreds of millions of landless and land-poor peasants it meant to stand up, to throw off the landlord yoke, to gain land, stock, implements, and houses. But it meant much more than this. It meant to throw off superstition and study science, to abolish "word blindness" and learn to read, to cease considering women as chattels and establish equality between the sexes, to do away with appointed village magistrates and replace them with elected councils. It meant to enter a new world.⁵⁰

Obviously these words are applicable to a specific people at a specific point in time. It recognizes the situation of the people, the peasants, and their aspirations for a better life. It fits a particular culture, and would not fit another. And it calls for much more than political change. It

⁴⁹ Quoted in Douglas Pike, *PAVN*, 1986, 31.

⁵⁰ William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (NY: Random House, 1966), vii.

calls for social and ultimately cultural change, the creation of a new world view. It is impossible to develop strategies and doctrines to counter this type of transformation without substantial knowledge of the culture and situation of the people you are trying to save, and enormous resources, including tenacity that is fortified by the moral correctness of the effort. A people undertaking such an effort must have enormous faith in their political system, and enormous desire to “save” another people and to bring about change. Without cultural affinity such a task is almost impossible. Consider the words of Senator John F. Kennedy written in 1956. Kennedy was a man who had great admiration for the struggle for freedom of the Vietnamese people, enormous faith in American power, great optimism about American willingness to sacrifice, and unbridled confidence in American intelligence, ingenuity, and ability to overcome. This can be considered a Counter-insurgency doctrine. He wrote:

We shall not attempt to buy the friendship of the Vietnamese. Nor can we win their hearts by making them dependent upon our handouts. What we must offer them is a revolution—a political, economic, and social revolution far superior to anything the Communists can offer—far more peaceful, far more democratic, and far more locally controlled. Such a revolution will require much from the United States and much from Vietnam. We must supply capital to replace that drained by centuries of colonial exploitation; technicians to train those handicapped by deliberate policies of illiteracy; guidance to assist a nation taking those first feeble steps toward the complexities of a republican form of government. We must assist the inspiring growth of Vietnamese democracy and economy, including the complete integration of those refugees who gave up their homes and their belongings to seek freedom. We must provide military assistance to rebuild the new Vietnamese Army, which every day faces the growing peril of Vietminh Armies across the border. This is the revolution we can, we should, we must offer to the people of Vietnam....⁵¹

Kennedy had a comprehensive, but naïve assessment of what needed to be done. The military aspect was just one part of a larger theory of political transformation. The realities of geography, manpower, resources, economic conditions, and culture were not insurmountable difficulties in Kennedy’s view. Kennedy was not realistic about the time this transformation

⁵¹ John Kennedy, “Conference of the American Friends of Vietnam June 1, 1956,” *The Strategy of Peace*, ed. Allan Nevins (NY: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 64.

would take and the patients of the American people. He seemed to not understand what he sought was in fact a significant cultural transformation. He seemed to not understand that democracies require abundance, a large middle class, and an educated population; and that it had taken hundreds of years to develop in the West. Let me argue that the biggest problems for the United States in insurgency wars is the impatience of the American people, arrogance and intolerance of the American political leadership, and the lack of cultural understanding of the people they wish to transform. One way to win a war is to destroy the will of the people. The will of the American people was defeated in Vietnam. Consider the reflections of General Palmer:

1961 was more than just eight years before 1969. It was an entire era away. The confidence and crusading zeal so much in evidence previously were now dormant, if not missing altogether. National will and pride had wilted to an alarming degree; long hot summers of racial strife and a long, long hot war had sapped the people's spirit. America suffered from a malaise of the soul. It was ill at ease with the world and unable to find peace with itself. Not for a hundred years had divisive winds blown across the country; not for nearly two hundred had revolution been so openly and seriously discussed. The reasons for the restless mood were many and complex—but forming a somber backdrop to all, and foremost in the public mind, was the Vietnam War.⁵²

Before initiating a war, a people ought to know themselves. When Johnson and Bush entered their respective wars, not only were they ignorant of the nature of their wars, they were ignorant of their armed forces and the American people. The price of their ignorance was high. The U.S. departure from Vietnam was much more than a national disgrace, it was human tragedy. While millions of individual horrors took place in Indochina, while genocide took place in Cambodia, th0e U.S., and the rest of the Western World, looked the other way. American ignorance of war is not only killing Americans, it is killing tens and hundreds of thousands of people in foreign lands.

Guerrilla Forces Guerrilla forces are para-military forces that operate in the interior of enemy held territory. Guerrillas are civilians recruited and trained to fight an enemy among the

⁵² Dave R. Palmer, General U.S. Army, *Summons of the Trumpet* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1978), 271, 272.

population to which they are native. Guerrillas have the ability to move undetected among the people. They operate at the local, regional, and national levels. They use their anonymity to carry out operations against the government, to win supporters, to recruit fighters, collect intelligence, kill collaborators, and terrorize and/or control the population. Their objective is to gain the support of the people by demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the established government.

Clausewitz described the environment conducive to guerrilla warfare.

These definitions give the reader a basic understanding of the terms, concepts, and ideas necessary to understand, analyze, and discuss war.

Summary of Clausewitz and other concepts discussed:

—War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.

—War can be limited or total. There is range of commitment of resources and effort.

—The political objective will determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort, it requires.

—To fight total war the government, the armed forces, and the people must support the war and work with some minimal degree of harmony—the “remarkable trinity” of war.

—There are three ways to win a war, destroy the enemy’s main armed forces, destroy the will of the people, and/or destroy the enemy government.

—There are three levels of war, the strategic, operational, and tactical. The tactical level concerns the conduct of the battle, the operational level, the conduct of the campaign, and, the strategic level, the conduct of the war.

—A state is a political entity, with geographic borders, a central government and bureaucracy capable of extracting and directing the resources and energy of its people, a military to maintain external security, and a police force to maintain internal security. States possess legitimate authority to which people respond, as a rule, without question.

—A nation is a cultural entity. The people of a nation are connected to one another in significant ways through language, history, custom, ethnicity or race, religion, nationality, or some other ideologies. The peoples of nations possess the cohesion that makes possible total war.

—A nation-state combines the attributes of both the state and the nation, to form the most powerful political and military entity in history. Only nation-states are capable of fighting modern total war.

—Strategy is the long range plan to use the resources of the nation-state to achieve political objectives. Political objectives are deduced from broadly stated national Policies, which ideally reflect the values, ethics, and beliefs of the people. There are multiple levels of strategy, national,

coalition, theater, operational, and tactical. Nation-states, as a rule, act in their own best interest. Hence, national strategy normally has priority over coalition strategy.

—The Center of Gravity is the point of decision, the focal point against which all resources are, or should be, directed to produce decisive results. The strategic centers of gravity are the will of the people, the enemy's main forces, and/or the enemy's government.

—A nation, a people, can suffer traumas that damage them psychologically influencing their ability to think and act rationally and objectively. Coherent, effective strategy takes into consideration psychological injuries.

—Doctrine is the authoritative, fundamental principles that guide the conduct of military forces towards the achievement of theater military objectives and ultimately national or coalition political objectives. Doctrine is employed at all levels of war. Tactical doctrine is unique to a particular service and terrain. Operational doctrine, at its best, is joint doctrine that produces synergy; however, it too can be exclusive to a particular service. Strategic doctrine is unique to a particular nation-state. Doctrine is a function of culture, technology, geography, knowledge, experience, and leadership. Doctrine transmits ways of fighting to all the members of a service and to enemies and potential enemies, ideally deterring war.