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**CLAUSEWITZIAN CONCEPTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE
TO MODERN WARFARE EXPERIENCES IN
OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR**

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK J. REDLINGER
United States Army

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CLAUSEWITZIAN CONCEPTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO MODERN WARFARE
EXPERIENCES IN OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

by

Lieutenant Colonel Mark J. Redlinger
United States Army

Colonel (Retired) Arthur F. Lykke, Jr.
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Mark J. Redlinger (LTC), USA

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Modern warfare experiences especially in operations other than war have forced us to rethink many of our traditional concepts. This rethinking has included thoughts propounded by Carl von Clausewitz in his book On War. This study explores certain Clausewitzian concepts and relates them to the UN peacekeeping operations in Somalia from 15 August 1992 until 31 March 1994. It argues that while warfare experiences have changed, there is still continuity between Clausewitz's philosophy on the nature of war and today's operations other than war. War is a human experience and remains so even today. That commonality of human interaction transcends eras and gives timelessness to concepts found in On War.

1. Introduction

There are many who have studied Carl von Clausewitz's book On War and who have opinions as to whether what Clausewitz said about war is still relevant for us today. Though most would agree that Clausewitz deserves a place of prominence amongst war theorists, many believe that as nation-states seemingly begin to disappear, so also the relevance of his ideas. In this paper I will attempt to explore for us his *philosophical* foundations on the nature of war and show their relevance for us today within our modern warfare experiences of operations other than war.

I allege first and foremost that Clausewitz was a philosopher philosophizing as to the philosophical truth concerning war. War *qua* war. His goal was to educate the judgment of the leader as to the truth of war, not tell him what to do once the leader grasped that truth.¹ If it is true that Clausewitz was a philosopher, then the validity of that philosophy for us is directly proportional as to how well that philosophy explains the forces moving in our world of today.

Georg Hegel, a philosopher contemporary with Clausewitz, states: "Truth in philosophy means that concept and external reality correspond."² If it is true that Clausewitz's thoughts are timeless, then his concepts and our experiences of external reality should still correspond. In fact, this is the methodology I will pursue in exploring the question I posed earlier. Firstly, I will explain Clausewitz's concepts by

focusing on his descriptions about the nature of war, the ends of war, strategies of war, and finally, the trinitarian interrelationships within war. Secondly, I will relate these concepts to a modern historical experience or external reality. That historical experience will be the UN peacekeeping operations in Somalia. Having laid out the road map of our journey, I will now turn to the first task. This is done with some apprehension. I cannot but fail to think of biblical scholarship and the interpretation of Sacred Scripture. As many there are who have read Carl von Clausewitz, so are the number of interpretations.

2. Definition of War

Clausewitz defines war in general terms at the very beginning of his book On War when he writes, "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will...Force—that is, physical force—is thus the *means* to war; to impose our will on the enemy is its *object*. To secure that object we must render the enemy powerless; and that, in theory, is the aim of warfare."³ He compares war as a whole "...by imagining a pair of wrestlers. Each tries through physical force to compel the other to do his will; his *immediate* aim is to *throw* his opponent in order to make him incapable of further resistance."⁴ This is the nature of absolute war. However, in reality this is not what happens. Why not?

In the purest, abstract sense or absolute sense, war should escalate to an extreme where it would solely be "...a clash of

forces freely operating and obedient to no law but their own."⁵ However, Clausewitz admits that this is never the case in the real world because war is not an isolated act independent of previous events in the political world, nor is it a single decisive act and lastly, it is not perfect, i.e., complete and self-contained. Therefore, real war is a modification and limitation to absolute war because its "...political object—the original motive for the war—will thus determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires."⁶

Because the political objective modifies absolute war, then real or what he also calls limited war's scale is directly proportional to the predominance of the political objective. "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."⁷ And though real war is always a modification of absolute war, still, absolute war must be the general point of reference "...so that he who wants to learn from theory becomes accustomed to keeping that point in view constantly, to measuring all his hopes and fears by it, and to approximating it *when he can* or *when he must*."⁸ Clausewitz uses this reflection to define the nature of real war.

Real war becomes in its more precise definition an instrument to compel the enemy by force to do our political will and thus "...a true political instrument, a continuation of

political intercourse, carried on with other means..."⁹

Furthermore, no one "...starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the later its operational objective."¹⁰ I have now discussed Clausewitz's concept as to the nature of real war, that is, physical force to compel the enemy to do our political will, and the ends of war, that is, the political objective. I will now discuss the strategies involved in war.

3. The Two Types of Strategies

There has been a lot of discussion whether Clausewitz identifies one or two distinct strategies. I could state with some confidence that many accept the strategy of annihilation as part of Clausewitz's thinking concerning war and the ends of war. There are passages throughout his book On War which seem to confirm this fact. Such passages are: "Destruction of the enemy forces is the overriding principle of war;"¹¹ and later on, in Book VII The Attack: "Destruction of the enemy's forces is the means to the end."¹² Of course, we need to ask ourselves exactly what is the way by which the strategy of annihilation attains the end.

Michael Howard in Clausewitz expresses the prevailing view: "...the destruction of the enemy forces was what really mattered. This destruction was not simply *contributory* to the final

objective of the strategist; it was in itself an *intrinsic part* of that objective. It was ultimately, to use another commercial analogy, the only thing that would show up on the final balance sheet of war."¹³ The strategy of annihilation in this particular case becomes *Vernichtungsstrategie*, i.e., a destruction of the army strategy bent upon the one great *Schlacht* or cataclysmic battle.¹⁴ There is, however, another interpretation of the writings of Clausewitz and their reference to forms of strategy. It was during the great German strategic debate between 1891-1914 and the contributions of Hans Delbrück to that debate that we find the first articulation of this other, minority view.

Hans Delbrück believed that Clausewitz had in mind two types of strategy. The first was what Delbrück called *Niederwerfungsstrategie* and the second was what he called *Ermattungsstrategie*. The general translation of the first term has been the strategy of annihilation and the translation of the second term has been the strategy of attrition. These two terms are key and we should not lightly pass over their translation for, I believe, the English translation is somewhat misleading and does not adequately foster the ideas which I believe Delbrück wished to convey.

Niederwerfung is the substantive form of the verb *niederwerfen*. *Niederwerfen* is to throw someone to the floor, to place someone on their knees. The meaning of *Niederwerfung* is suppression or overthrow.¹⁵ The German word for annihilation is

aufreiben which means to wipe out. In fact, the example used in the dictionary is "...*die Truppen wurden völlig aufgerieben.*"¹⁶ This term has both a figurative and a literal meaning. I have discussed the literal meaning. The figurative meaning is similar to the English expression. After a period of strenuous hard work or exercising when I'm completely spent physically, I might say, "I'm wiped out." This does not mean that I no longer exist; rather, it means that I can no longer do any more physical work. I'm totally drained. To use Clausewitz's wrestling analogy, the strategy of annihilation accepts only one way to win the wrestling match. The opponent must be thrown to the floor and pinned. Clausewitz states: "The fighting forces must be *destroyed*: that is, they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight. Whenever we use the phrase 'destruction of the enemy's forces' this alone is what we mean."¹⁷ The nuance, then, is that the strategy of annihilation seeks to achieve the fruits of victory by focusing on the opposing forces as the center of gravity of the opponent's will to resist. The demise of those forces brings about a corresponding subjugation of the enemy's military and thus political will. However, says Delbrück, there is another element to Clausewitz's discussion and that is the concept of *Ermattungsstrategie*.

The traditional interpretation of *Ermattungsstrategie* has been the strategy of attrition. This is in fact Walter Renfroe's

translation of the term in Delbrück's four volume work History of the Art of War in the Framework of Political History. The difficulty with using the word attrition is that everything in war is by definition attrition. Even the strategy of annihilation is attrition warfare in the precise definition of the term. The German verb *ermatten* means something else, I believe. It means to become *matt*, i.e., weak, powerless, without desire, tired.¹⁸ This conveys that the mere creating of conditions whereby the will of the army or the government no longer desires to resist, is of itself sufficient. This means that the actual battle may never take place. The goal is to weaken the resolve of the opposing state to a point whereby they concede the political end even without the *Schlacht*. In essence, whereby the strategy of annihilation seeks to pin the opponent to the floor, the strategy of exhausting, which I feel is a better translation than attrition, seeks to win the match on points.

Delbrück, I believe, supports this when he says: "One may not so much place his hopes on completely defeating the enemy as on wearing him out and exhausting him by blows and destruction of all kinds to the extent that in the end he prefers to accept the conditions of the victor, which in this case must always show a certain modification."¹⁹ Delbrück succinctly states the fundamental differences between these two notions of strategies: "Consequently, battle plays a role both in the strategy of annihilation and that of attrition [Renfroe's translation of

Ermattungsstrategies], but the difference is that in the former strategy it is the one means that outweighs all others and draws all other onto itself, while in the strategy of attrition it is to be regarded as one means that can be chosen from among several."²⁰ Clausewitz writings in On War upholds this notion of a strategy of exhausting.

In Book One On the Nature of War, Clausewitz says that hostilities "...cannot be considered to have ended so long as the enemy's will has not been broken: in other words, so long as the enemy government and its allies have not been driven to ask for peace, or the population made to submit."²¹ Besides the physical destruction of the enemy's forces and occupation of his territory, one can wear down the enemy. As Clausewitz says, "Wearing down the enemy in conflict means using *the duration of the war to bring about a gradual exhaustion of his physical and moral resistance.*"²² There is some difficulty, however, in linking Delbrück's two strategies with Clausewitz's two types of wars.

Clausewitz does not use the term *ermatten*. Rather, he uses the terms *Ermüdung* and *Erschöpfung*. *Ermüdung* comes from *ermüden* which means *müde machen* in the sense that this activity makes me tired.²³ A synonym, however, is *ermatten*. *Erschöpfung*, on the other hand, means *vollkommene Ermüdung* or absolutely exhausted.²⁴ Raymond Aron in Clausewitz: Philosopher of War opines that this fact that Clausewitz does not use the term *ermatten* places the

notion of *Ermattungsstrategie* outside of Clausewitz's conceptual system.²⁵ Juxtaposed to this view is Delbrück's argument that the notion of two strategies was a late development in Clausewitz's thinking.

Delbrück argues that Clausewitz overemphasized the concept of annihilation to counterbalance strategic writers of his time such as Dietrich von Bülow and Henry Evans Lloyd who themselves emphasized a mathematical approach to war. Their views subordinated a strategy of exhaustion to a strategy of annihilation.²⁶ According to Delbrück, however, this does not mean that Clausewitz denies the concept of a strategy of exhaustion. After all, Clausewitz believed that when the will and the power do not permit a strategy of annihilation, then we must limit our strategy to something less than annihilation. If Delbrück's argument is valid, then the seemingly disparity in vocabulary is one of form not substance. Furthermore, Delbrück coined the term *Ermattungsstrategie* to better articulate the second type of strategy which he believed Clausewitz alluded to in his book On War and other later writings. Therefore, the fact that the term *Ermattungsstrategie* does not enter into Clausewitz's vocabulary is not significant. The term *Ermattungsstrategie* is Delbrück's choice in order to convey precisely what he believed Clausewitz intended. I personally agree with Delbrück and therefore feel that Clausewitz whether directly or indirectly foresaw two types of strategies: the

strategy of annihilation and the strategy of exhausting. I will now move on to one last Clausewitzian concept—the trinitarian model of war.

4. The Clausewitzian Trinity

Clausewitz, almost in passing, states that there are three tendencies in war. The first is "...composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force."²⁷ This tendency concerns the people.²⁸ The next tendency is "...the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam."²⁹ This tendency concerns the commander and the army.³⁰ The final tendency is "...its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone."³¹ This tendency, the political aim, is the concern of the business of government alone.³² These three tendencies form what is generally called the 'Clausewitzian Trinity.' To place this trinitarian concept in perspective as well as to encapsulate the totality of what I have discussed concerning Clausewitz's concepts, I will use Clausewitz's own analogy—the wrestler.

The human actors in a wrestling match are the organizers of the event, the wrestlers and their coaches, and the opposing fans. The fans are the people. Their purpose is to arouse the wrestlers' emotions in order to increase their will power and physical determination for victory. The coaches and the wrestlers are the commanders and the armies who are battling in

the ring. The organizers of the match are the governments who have determined what the prize will be. All three of these must exist and must be in balance for without a significant enough prize the wrestlers would not wrestle and the crowd would not pay; without the cheers of the crowd the match would be void of the emotions to drive the wrestlers and their coaches to achieve feats heretofore not thought possible; without the wrestlers and coaches there would be no match to decide the possessor of the prize. Finally, the goal of the match is to pin the opponent; however, not all matches end with a pin. Some end by declaring the winner the one with the most accumulated points. So it is with real war. In real war a pin, the strategy of annihilation, is not always possible or desirable. Instead, points, the strategy of exhausting, determine the victor. I have now explained how I understand some of Clausewitz's basic philosophical foundations on war. Now I will turn our attention to the second phase of my methodology, i.e., relating these concepts to a modern warfare experience in an operation short of war—the UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia between 15 August 1992 and 31 March 1994.

5. Somalian Operations

In 1981 Major General Muhammad Siad Barre, the ruler in Somalia, placed members of his own Marehan clan into government positions while also excluding members of the Mijertyn and Isaq clans. These excluded clans initiated clashes with government

troops beginning in 1982. Despite Barre's attempts to placate insurgents by proposing a multiparty government, the civil war intensified. Only Mogadishu and portions of Hargeysa and Berbera were firmly in government control by 1989. In 1991 Barre was forced to flee the capital and was accepted for asylum in Nigeria. The clans, now in control of Somalia, had difficulty in forming a coalition to govern the country. In the next 23 months about 50,000 people were killed in factional fighting, and an estimated 300,000 died of starvation. World opinion was made aware of this situation and the UN began humanitarian efforts to relieve the suffering.

The UN with airlift assistance from the United States began Operation Provide Relief (UNOSOM I) which lasted from 15 August 1992 until 9 December 1992. The UN operation sought to alleviate two problems: move enough food, water and medicine into Somalia for relief efforts and provide security for those relief forces.³³ This was the first of three distinct phases of UN involvement. The second phase began on 9 December 1992 when a contingent of U.S. Marines landed near Mogadishu as the vanguard of a UN peacekeeping force sent to restore order and support international resumption of food distribution and humanitarian aid in preparation for UNOSOM II.³⁴ This second phase, Restore Hope (UNITAF), lasted from 9 December 1992 until 4 May 1993 and totaled 38,000 military personnel of which 28,000 were Americans. The third and final phase began on 4 May 1993 and finished, at

least major US involvement did, on 31 March 1994. This phase, USFOR SOM (UNOSOM II), operated under UN Security Council Resolution 814 as a Chapter VII peacekeeping operation under the UN Charter.

Resolution 814 directed rehabilitation of political and economic institutions as well as building a secure environment especially in the northern part of Somalia which had declared its independence.³⁵ Clashes became frequent between Somali factions and UN troops with an estimated 1000 Somali killed. On 5 June 1993, supporters of Aideed, one of the warlords, killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in an ambush. The UN responded with Resolution 839 calling for the apprehension of those responsible. This led to an intense manhunt for Aideed and his supporters. A series of encounters between US Rangers and various Somali units followed. On 3 October 1993 a major engagement occurred between US Rangers and Aideed supporters resulting in 18 Americans killed and 75 wounded. President Clinton shortly thereafter issued a statement announcing the phased withdrawals of American troops that would be completed by 31 March 1994.³⁶ American troops returned briefly in February 1995 to protect the departure of the remaining UN peacekeeping forces. Today Somalia still has no central government and Mogadishu remains divided between basically two competing clan organizations. So much for the historical background of the three phased UN operations in Somalia. Let me now provide a short description of the Somali

political structure and clan organization at the time of the operation.

6. Somali Political Structure

It is important to understand that the crux of Somali politics is the interaction between the clan and sub-clan groups. The largest clan is the Hawiye with 25% of the population followed by the Isaaq with 22% of the population and then the Darood with 20%. The Rahanwein, the Dir, and the Digil clans make up the rest.³⁷ The Hawiye and the Isaaq were the civilian administrators during the colonial rule by the Italians and British. The Darood formed the Italian and British colonial militiamen because of their hardiness. A major consequence of this division of clan labor was the intensification of traditional clan rivalries.³⁸

Prior to 1969, the Isaaq and Majertain, a sub-clan of the Darood, enjoyed the largest benefits from their control of the government. After the coup in 1969 by Siad Barre, the Darood clans, less the Majertain, obtained economic and political favors at the expense of the remaining clans in Somali. Additionally, Siad Barre attempted to repress and divide the other clans. This led to just the opposite effect Siad Barre intended. The remaining clans out of necessity organized themselves politically in an effort to force some form of political outlet under Siad Barre's repressive rule.³⁹ By 1992 there were seven political

groups formed around the clan and sub-clans. I'll briefly describe them.

General Mohammed Farah Aideed formed the Somali National Alliance (SNA) on 14 August 1992. A faction from the Somali Patriotic Movement who were mainly Ogadenis, a faction from the United Somali Congress under General Aideed, a small southern group composed of Digil and Mirifleh sub-clans and the Somali Southern National Movement, and a group of southern clans composed this organization. Immediately after formation, the SNA attacked the Hawadle Hawiye sub-clan which held the Mogadishu port area.⁴⁰

The Somali National Front (SNF) was a small organization formed from a sub-clan of the Darood and was the organization in control of Somalia during Siad Barre's rule. It comprised only 3% of the population.⁴¹

The Somali National Movement (SNM) comprised 22% of the population and consisted of members from the Isaaq clan. This organization started in London in 1981. It had traditionally been led by former members of Siad Barre's military. It received most of its funding from Arab states to include Saudi Arabia. Efforts to unite this organization with the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) had been thwarted by the Hawiye members for fear that the Majertain clan who dominate the SSDF would in the end also dominate the alliance.⁴²

The Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), which I have already mentioned, represented the Majertain aspirations. It was an outgrowth of the misrule of Siad Barre and comprised members from the Majertain former Air Force officers who attempted a coup in 1978. Most of its funding came from Ethiopia and Libya.⁴³

Elements from the Ogadenis sub-clan of the Darood formed the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM). They lived in the southern part of Somalia and were beset with much internal friction.⁴⁴

The United Somali Congress (USC) was predominantly Hawiye. There was a power struggle between two sub-clan leaders: Ali Mahdi from the Mogadishu Abgal sub-clan and General Mohammed Fahar Aideed from the rural Habr Gedir sub-clan. The Aideed faction joined to form the Somali National Alliance, previously described, and had seized most of Mogadishu from Ali Mahdi. Ali Mahdi had obtained the backing of one wing of the United Somali Congress, the Somali Patriotic Movement and the Majertain-led Somali Salvation Democratic Front as well as three smaller clans. Aideed was attempting to meld a coalition of the Hawiye and Isaaq which would have comprised about 50% of the population. This of course would threaten the influence of the Darood clan and its sub-clans who comprise only 20% of the population of Somalia, but who had been the traditional power base in Somalia.⁴⁵

A last political organization only comprised a few hundred followers. This was the Western Somali Liberation Front. It was a group Siad Barre established to support destabilization of

Ethiopian rule in the Ogaden.⁴⁶ We have now concluded our background material relating to the Somalia Operations and are ready to analyze the operation using Clausewitzian concepts to determine their relevance.

7. A Clausewitzian Analysis of the Somalian Operations

The first concept is the clear articulation of a political end state. No one, as Clausewitz said, "...starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."⁴⁷ Peacekeeping serves a definite political end state which spans from eliminating violence to the building of a viable political and economic system which guarantees stability and protection of human rights. For the US, President Clinton has generically defined our political goal in peacekeeping as a means "...to resolve regional conflicts and bolster new democratic governments."⁴⁸ He recognizes, however, that as in the case of Somalia: "No outside force can create a stable and legitimate domestic order for another society—that work can only be accomplished by the society itself."⁴⁹ For Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, the political goal was to achieve a secure environment and to conduct nation-building so as to achieve a long term resolution of the problem. Hidden in this operation was a tangential goal of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali to "...demonstrate the new interventionist doctrine for the UN."⁵⁰ How did the use of military force facilitate the

achievement of these political ends? After all, according to Clausewitz, war is an extension of policy and is "...an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will..."⁵¹ To answer this question we must distinguish interventionist peacekeeping operations from humanitarian assistance which uses military logistical support and which the existing stable government guarantees a secure environment.

In essence you have two types of peacekeeping operations: permissive humanitarian assistance effort with military logistical support and non-permissive humanitarian assistance with military security operations. The military end state in the latter is the neutralization in some manner of the opposing armed forces thus creating an environment by which other agencies can proceed with nation-building. Military intervention is not the solution but rather complements the solution by providing a balance against disruptive internal armed forces. This leaves us with two types of strategies to affect this internal security: the strategy of annihilation or the strategy of exhausting.

Generally, the strategy of annihilation is not an acceptable option because it necessitates the elimination of one or the other parties' military capabilities through decisive military action. This goes against the purpose of peacekeeping operations where the political agents are attempting to arrange an accommodation between the parties to the chaos. The strategy of exhausting which, I contend, has been the strategy implicitly

adopted in most peacekeeping operations, is the only other alternative. This strategy calls for a clear understanding of the weaknesses within the Clausewitzian Trinity so as to attack the center of gravity of that triangle. This brings us to the Clausewitzian Trinity within the Somali clans.

As we have already stated, when we think of Somalia we think of a country comprising clans. In a clan system the political end derives its definition from the clan leader or warlord. The army consists of men of fighting age but supported by all the members of the clan organization. Their loyalty runs strong to the clan and the leader who best exemplifies the goals of the clan or sub-clan. In the case of the clans in Somalia, two clan leaders were vying for dominance—their political objective. These two leaders were Ali Mahdi and General Mohammed Fahar Aideed. Though Ali Mahdi was the interim president, he had virtually no authority in the country. Their military objectives were to control what was vital to the economical well-being of their factions as well as to secure their territory. In the case of Aideed, he was a warlord who thrived on the chaotic situation and in fact took every opportunity to take advantage of the UN presence. Even after the UN was able to achieve some consensus with the other clan elders, Aideed remained antagonistic to the entire process. After all, chaos kept him in power. To be successful in this situation, then, a strategy of exhausting must seek to form a federation from each clans'

Clausewitzian Trinity while also neutralizing their capability to threaten each other by force. In the case where one clan organization is obstructing the process, such as was the case with Aideed and his followers, then the strategy must also seek to break the Clausewitzian Trinity by affecting the will of the people, or removing the influence of the government, i.e., clan warlord, or neutralizing the clan militia or combinations thereof. Additionally, the peacekeeping force must be willing to remain until this has occurred and internal stability is far enough along to allow the country to proceed along the road to governmental viability. Did the UN attempt any of these in the Somalia operations? Was there an harmonious relationship between the UN's Clausewitzian Trinity and the strategy of exhausting? Let's see.

Addressing the last question first, there was no coherency on the UN side as to the political end and the military means to achieve that end. It was not until late in the operation that the UN Secretary-General focused on the overarching political end state. That end state was to pursue nation-building in an effort to bring long term stability and relief to Somalia. This delay made the military end state difficult to define and therefore to support with effective intervention. No one, as Clausewitz said, "...starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."⁵² This lack of

full vision of the political end state resulted in discordance between the political objective and the military objective. This is clearly seen during the UNITAF or second phase and brings us to answering the other question.

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali argued that the establishment of a secure environment as a preparation for UNOSOM II required the disarming of clan gunmen. This especially included any heavy weapons. The US UNITAF Commander disagreed that this in fact was part of his mission. This disagreement stemmed from at least three factors. Firstly, there was disagreement between the Secretary-General and the UNITAF Commander as to what constituted a secure environment. The UNITAF Commander did not consider disarmament necessary for a secure environment. Secondly, the US guidance was to avoid any high risk operations beyond the bare necessity of supporting food distribution. Finally, disarmament and destruction of weapons is a long-term operation. The US involvement was to last only as long as necessary to open the supply lines.⁵³ Two elements of Clausewitzian concepts had been violated: ambiguous political objectives or worse 'mission creep' and a breakdown between the political leadership and the UNITAF Commander's understanding of the nature of the military mission. Of course, the fact that the UNITAF Commander had to also respond to his own political boss besides the Secretary-General even made harmony in this realm more difficult. This disagreement prevented the disarming of the

clansmen which we have seen is an element to the strategy of exhausting. It doesn't get any better. There were other fractures within the Clausewitzian Trinity.

One can deduce from both the restrictions the UNITAF Commander operated under to minimize American casualties and the unwillingness by the US government to commit to any long term involvement that the American people were not committed to the peacekeeping operations in Somalia. This became evident with the deaths of 18 Americans and 75 wounded. In effect, those deaths brought the US to the end of its political and domestic will to continue the operations. This lack of US willingness to remain committed doomed the UN effort.

Even if the US government had the political will necessary for a long term commitment, it did nothing extraordinary to stimulate the American people to support the effort. As Clausewitz observed, "...if the policy is directed only toward minor objectives, the emotions of the masses will be little stirred and they will have to be stimulated rather than held back."⁵⁴ Peacekeeping operations when laid against the hierarchy of domestic concerns rarely is weighty enough to stir and arouse the people sufficiently to maintain commitment to a strategy of exhausting. What about the last element of the Clausewitzian Trinity—the military?

The military accomplished those missions given to it by the political leadership. However, it is difficult for the military

leader to plan a long term engagement which a strategy of exhausting requires without a corresponding desire by the political leaders. The reluctance by the political leadership to have the military conduct high risk operations as well as the 'get in and get out quickly attitude' influenced the military and its manner of conducting their operations. This became so debilitating that by mid-1994, after the US had withdrawn, the "...foreign troops rarely left their bases..."⁵⁵ In the end, the military had become impotent and saw the fruitlessness of the situation thus finalizing the collapse of an already ineffectual Clausewitzian Trinity; and, an ineffectual Clausewitzian trinity dooms a strategy of exhausting to failure and that is what occurred here. Where does all of this leave us?

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

From this case study there is strong support that Clausewitzian concepts do have relevance for us today even in the realm of operations other than war. You may say, however, this is only one of many non-permissive peacekeeping operations and does not universalize Clausewitzian principles for all non-permissive peacekeeping operations. There I would disagree. The fundamental elements are still there: the need for a clearly articulated over-arching political end state; the need for a military plan with sufficient latitude to operate with rules of engagement to conduct a successful strategy; and the need for the integration of the players in the Clausewitzian Trinity. Old

concepts are not necessarily outdated—especially when those concepts are derivatives of observations about human experiences.

Clausewitz was a philosopher observing the human experiences of war and how societies participated in them. The fact that those experiences occurred close to two hundred years ago does not make them any less relevant. The human person is timeless. Even the fact that his observations were part of a system of international relations which interchanged through the medium of nation-states should not be to the detriment of his observations. After all, nation-states are fundamentally societies bounded by geographic limits with an advanced bureaucratic system of government. Clans are similar to nation-states in that they too have a system of government which they exercise over a geographic region. The primary difference between clans and nation-states is that clans are not as bureaucratically structured.

Countries like Somalia were artificially created with little regard to ethnic boundaries by colonial powers. Much of the give and take of these regional conflicts are those societies redefining by self-determination what the actual boundaries ought to be. Even traditional nation-states have fought wars so as to solidify ethnic groupings within countries and between countries irrespective of their geographic borders. Traditional nation-states may be more formal and complex in the manner they communicate within and between themselves, but fundamentally they are societies with governments expressing common goals and

values. This is the reason, as we have seen with our case study of Somalia, that Clausewitzian concepts have relevance even in our modern warfare experience of operations other than war. Having said that, what can we do to prevent future failures?

The most important thing we can do is to understand first of all that the military is only one part of the triangle and in most peacekeeping operations a subordinate one. The most critical contributor is the political element to include diplomatic, economic and informational elements of power. Future peacekeeping operations should include a political campaign plan which focuses all these elements into a coordinated whole. This idea is one that Walter S. Clarke has proposed and which, I believe, has merit. Only in this way can we hope to end the haphazard evolution of political objectives and their resulting decoupling from military operations.

Modern warfare experiences in operations other than war have forced us to rethink many of our traditional concepts. This study explored certain Clausewitzian concepts and related them to the UN peacekeeping operations in Somalia from 15 August 1992 until 31 March 1994. It argued that while warfare experiences have changed, Clausewitz's philosophy on the nature of war still has relevance to today's operations other than of war. Hopefully, I have convinced you of that fact.

ENDNOTES

¹ Michael Howard, Clausewitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 32.

² Georg Hegel (1770-1831), German philosopher. *The Philosophy of Right*, "Introduction," Addition 16 (1821; tr. 1942).

³ Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 75.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 78.

⁶ Ibid., 81.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 581.

⁹ Ibid., 87.

¹⁰ Ibid., 579.

¹¹ Ibid., 258.

¹² Ibid., 529.

¹³ Howard, 44.

¹⁴ Ibid., 43-46.

¹⁵ Deutsches Wörterbuch, ed. Gerhard Wahrig (Munich: Mosaik Verlag GMBH, 1980), 2693.

¹⁶ Ibid, 468.

¹⁷ Clausewitz, 90.

¹⁸ Deutsches Wörterbuch, 1163.

¹⁹ Hans Delbrück, History of the Art of War within the Framework of Political History, Vol. IV, trans. Walter J. Renfro, Jr. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), ix.

- ²⁰ Ibid., 294.
- ²¹ Clausewitz, 90.
- ²² Ibid., 93.
- ²³ Deutsches Wörterbuch, 1164.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 1170.
- ²⁵ Raymond Aron, Clausewitz: Philosopher of War (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1983), p.77.
- ²⁶ Arden Bucholz, Hans Delbrück & The German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1985), 35.
- ²⁷ Clausewitz, 89.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Kenneth Allard, SOMALIA OPERATIONS: Lessons Learned (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1995), 14.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 16.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 18.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 20.
- ³⁷ Walter S. Clarke, SOMALIA: Background Information For Operation Restore Hope 1992-1993 (US Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993), 9.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 10.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁴¹ Ibid., 14.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Clausewitz, 579.

⁴⁸ A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1995), 9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., iii.

⁵⁰ Samuel M. Makinda, Seeking Peace from Chaos: Humanitarian Intervention in Somalia (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1993), 68-69.

⁵¹ Clausewitz, 75.

⁵² Ibid., 579.

⁵³ Makinda, 71-72.

⁵⁴ Clausewitz, 88.

⁵⁵ Terrence Lyons and Ahmed I. Samatar, Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 60.

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