



What Happens After the Cold War? Clausewitzian U.S. Domestic Politics against Resurgent Russia

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BSOS SRI 2016

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INTRODUCTION

On June 20, 2016 Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter spoke about “five major, immediate and evolving challenges” for the United States Military. The first threat mentioned was not ISIL nor North Korea’s nuclear weaponry, but “countering Russian aggression and cohesion.” While there is a vast literature addressing how the United States should deal with Russian aggression, there remains uncertainty as to what instrument of state power the United States Armed Forces should use. In the vein of Carl Von Clausewitz’s “On War,” this study attempts to assess the tension between two key instruments in the recent monograph “Strategic Landpower and a Resurgent Russia: An Operational Approach to Deterrence” (Strategic Studies Institute, 2016), namely the informatics instrument and the land-based military instrument. We explore how these instruments are conceptualized in: (1) U.S. deterrence strategies against Russia, and (2) the assumed predictions of Russia’s actions.

JUSTIFICATION

This study explores the continued hesitancy to openly acknowledge the U.S. Army’s continuing need to synchronize its informatic and military capabilities. Why does this matter? It matters because the way that the Army fights (its landpower) is critically linked to how it develops and maintains American public support for its war effort (its informatics) – whether it wants to admit it or not. We are all affected by the direct and indirect costs of war, and by the opportunity costs of the enormous U.S. defense budget.

As Clausewitz states, “war is the continuation of politics” yet governments and the public possess the ability to influence what are the political objectives that both lead and morph military operations (Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz*). Nevertheless, the strategy literature consistently focuses on the military, economic and diplomatic instruments and omits any discussion regarding domestic politics (Howard, “The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy”).

METHODS

This is a qualitative study that blends historical and textual analyses. For this phase of the project, we have undertaken an extensive literature review in a process of theory construction, creating a database that draws from: a) classic strategic literature, focusing on the Clausewitzian tradition; b) a corpus of relevant articles in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*; c) U.S. Army strategy reports and field manuals; and d) recent news items.

INSTRUMENTS ACCORDING TO U.S. ARMY FIELD MANUAL 3-0 (2008)

DIPLOMATIC	• Involves diplomatic efforts to reach political settlements.
ECONOMIC	• “Variable that encompasses individual and group behaviors related to producing, distributing and consuming resources.”
MILITARY	• “The military variable includes the military capabilities of all armed forces in a given operational environment.”
INFORMATIONAL	• “Joint doctrine defines the information environment as the aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information (JP 3-13).”

CLASSIC CLAUSEWITZIAN THOUGHT

CLAUSEWITZ	Establishes three fundamental actors in war: the people, the government and the armies. He explores the psychological aspect of war, and how war is not just senseless violence but “the continuation of politics by other means.”
BASSFORD	Argues that clear political objectives are needed for military operations. Explores the role of politics in organized violence but does not define the role of information management.
SUMIDA	Points out the short-comings of Clausewitz’ <i>On War</i> , and how the people and government pressure the political objectives, but argues that the generals and armies are the “executors and main instrument.”
HOWARD	Argues that social strategy is one of the forgotten dimensions of military strategy. Suggests the need to recover the informatics instrument.
FREEDMAN	Demonstrates that Clausewitz understood the impact of popular passion on how wars were fought by undermining attempts at restraint and he recognized nationalism as a source of war. Does not include informatics in his theory.
LUKES	Influentially theorizes the three faces of power: decision-making; agenda-setting; ideology formation. Informatics cuts across all three.
WEIGLEY	Defines the “American Way of War” as a legacy of the Continental Army of the Revolutionary War, itself styled as a European army, which explains why the landpower instrument continues to trump informatics.



ANTI-CLAUSEWITZIAN THOUGHT

HUNTINGTON	Argues for the autonomy of the military profession and objective civilian control which advocates for the military to stay away from politics and not engage the informatics instrument
LIDDELL HART	Blames the character of World War I and World War II on Clausewitz. States that strategy is only concerned with the problem of winning military victory rather than winning peace, and argues that the objective of war is not politics but peace. This exacerbated American resistance to informatics.

CONCLUSION

We find that the secondary literature acknowledges the centrality of the informatics instrument to effective use of the military landpower instrument and that this knowledge has not been integrated into contemporary planning to address the resurgence of Russia. This confirms our theoretical insights concerning the suppression of informatics as a critical component of American military power. We theorize that the suppression of informatics may be triggered in this case by the negative connotations of Russia’s famed propaganda capabilities. The continuing inability to articulate a role for informatics in support of landpower but not propagandistic or in conflict with the press is creating a potential conflict with Russia. We argue for the need to find a language to describe the centrality of moderate, democratic informatics.



FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research in involves a comparison between SSI’s study “Strategic Landpower and a Resurgent Russia: An Operational Approach to Deterrence” (2016) and past studies that involved recommendations on U.S. deterrence strategies against Russia before Russia’s annexation of Crimea and their entrance and exit in the fight against the Islamic state.

Additionally, this study of American landpower and Resurgent Russia is part of a larger project that exposes the suppression of the informatics instrument – and domestic politics more broadly – across all domains of American military strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This would have not been possible without the guidance of Dr. Thomas Crosbie.

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