

## *The Continued Existence of the State: The Clausewitzian Concept of Cohesion*

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I employ the word 'state': it is obvious what is meant – some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. That is after all how the 'state' began on earth: I think that sentimentalism which would have it begin with a 'contract' has been disposed of. *Friedrich Nietzsche*<sup>1</sup>

Just as the character of the military institutions of the European states differed in the various periods, so did all their other conditions. Europe, essentially had broken down into a mass of minor states. Some were turbulent republics, others precarious small monarchies with very limited central power. A state of that type could not be said to be genuinely united; it was rather an agglomeration of loosely associated forces. Therefore we should not think of such a state as a personified intelligence acting according to simple and logical rules.

This is the point of view from which the policies and wars of the Middle Ages should be considered. . . . It would be easy to regard them as a chronic error, a delusion born of the spirit of the times, but there would be more sense in attributing them to a host of major causes, which we may possibly assimilate intellectually, but whose dynamic we will never comprehend as clearly as did the men who were actually obliged to contend with them. So long as the great powers that eventually grew out of this chaos needed time to consolidate and organize themselves, most of their strength and energies went into that process. Foreign wars were fewer, and those that did take place betrayed the marks of immature political cohesion. *Carl von Clausewitz*<sup>2</sup>

The modern state is an institutional association of rule which has successfully established the monopoly of physical violence as a means of rule within a territory, for which purpose it unites in the hands of its leaders the material means of operation, having expropriated all those functionaries of 'estates' who previously had command over these things in their own right, and has put itself, in the person of its highest embodiment, in their place. *Max Weber*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, II, 17. As to "blond beast" Walter Kaufmann, the translator of this passage and a specialist on Nietzsche has made a convincing argument that Nietzsche here is referring to lions (savage beasts), not to any specific race of people. See Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, AntiChrist*, page 225.

<sup>2</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 8, Chapter 3, page 710-11.

<sup>3</sup> Max Weber, *Weber Political Writings, The Profession and Vocation of Politics*, page 316.

The quotations above provide an introduction and three points of attraction to my argument in this, part 2 of my essay dealing with military historian Martin van Creveld's *The Transformation of War (TTW)* as well as his essay, "The Fate of the State". In part 1 I dealt with the inconsistencies of van Creveld's "non-trinitarian theory", the far more theoretically significant general theory of Clausewitz and finally mentioned some of the negative influences *TTW* has had on strategic theory since the early 1990s. The points of attraction are the enduring quality of the state, the Clausewitzian concepts of cohesion and the basic (non-bureaucratic) definition of the state. These points correspond roughly to Clausewitz's three ideal types of political communities and provide the main emphasis of this paper.

In this part I will expand my critique of van Creveld's two works, revisiting the situation as it looked immediately after the end of the Cold War, then introducing van Creveld's "dying state" thesis, followed by providing an opposing view which rejects this thesis and finally listing some of my own conclusions concerning the current state of strategic theory close to two decades after the publication of *TTW* and the proliferation of faddish concepts in strategic theory. Along the way I will introduce my own interpretation of the Clausewitzian concept of cohesion and how it can be effectively combined with the thought of Max Weber. This is the first treatment of this specific Clausewitzian concept that I am aware of.

The end of the Cold War brought about significant changes in the international order. The bi-polar international political system of that time provided a form of stability for much of Africa, Latin America, East Asia, and the Middle East. Various client states could always expect generous aid from one or both of the Super Powers in return for support or simple maintenance of the status quo. Due to the fact that the entire period of de-colonization in both Africa and the Middle East coincided with the Cold War period, the global ideological struggle, Western and even local African, Asian, and Arab attitudes were colored by the character of that struggle as well. Since the Soviet Union represented the Marxist version of reality, that only states ruled by the "proletariat" were in fact legitimate, that is anti-imperialist, then the USSR had much to gain at the expense of Western interests. This attitude, while common enough, hid the larger fact however that in reality there existed a good bit of ambivalence towards the Soviet Union among both educated Africans, Asians and Arabs. For many the beginning of the road to disenchantment with Marxism was a period of study in the USSR, where the workers' state was found to be plagued with many simple shortages and problems which didn't seem to exist in Western society. So instead of being a model for society, the Soviet Union steadily became a source of material support only.<sup>4</sup> During the

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<sup>4</sup> I base this view on personal observation. During the 1980's I screened scores of bright African students who were applying to reside in the West after having completed their studies in the USSR, Poland or East Germany. While they were grateful for the education they had received,

Cold War it was politically expedient to claim that various 3<sup>rd</sup> World client kleptocracies were in fact sovereign states, since the leadership of these entities (representing their respective peoples of course) had made conscious decisions concerning the relative merits of “democracy” or “socialism”. Thus providing the label of “state” to a created, arbitrary political entity (during the process of “decolonization”). This did not however, provide that entity with the characteristics of a real functioning state. Rather the term was used in an effort to provide a sense of legitimacy to the client entity. This state of affairs satisfied all the various big players, while doing little to improve the condition of the various peoples inhabiting these “states”. The formal colonial powers could wash their hands of responsibility for the situations in the formal colonies, the various Western lending institutions/economic interests had people with whom to deal, who legally represented the territories in question, and the whole framework provided a general political stability which could insure that super-power competition/confrontation did not get out of hand. Simply put, this system lasted as long as the two alliance blocks were willing to foot the bill, but ended quickly once those resources, and the willingness to support the scheme, dried up.

The effect of this expensive foreign policy on the cohesion of the USSR is rarely considered in studies of the end of the Cold War, but consider that in 1991 the Soviet Union had \$130 billion in unrecoverable 3<sup>rd</sup> World IOUs.<sup>5</sup> This does not include lost revenue due to having to supply various client states with oil which could have otherwise been sold on the world market in return for hard currency.

So is it any wonder that the post Cold War world is plagued by what are called “failed states”? Since all of the “failed states” (with the possible exception of Lebanon) have in fact failed since the end of the Cold War we must consider a connection between their fate and the end of Super Power rivalry, that is the so-called “failed states”, which never had the opportunity to become states at all within their generally arbitrarily drawn boundaries, have collapsed as a result of the foreign policy changes of other states, that is a result of state policy. The first of these was the former Soviet and then US client state of Somalia. Other examples of failed states abound in Africa, Asia, and even Europe it is alleged. In addition to Somalia, Liberia, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Sierra Leone are those most commonly mentioned, but there are other potential candidates as well. The 2002 *US National Security Strategy* even argued that, “America is threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few”.<sup>6</sup> In 2003, the confusion associated with this term and the

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all complained of the economic situation in the East Block and of the vast gap between the promises of Marxism-Leninism and the reality of daily life under “socialism”. The common joke was that the most effective cure for Communism was a period of study in Moscow.

<sup>5</sup> Herfried Münkler, *Empires*, Polity, Cambridge, 2007, p 144.

<sup>6</sup> See *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2002, page 1.

questionable concept/historical understanding behind it were used to justify military action by the US against Iraq, the “failed, or failing state” used as an excuse for preventive war.

The assumption of state decline has become deeply rooted in some schools of strategic theory and thought since Martin van Creveld published his highly influential book, *The Transformation of War* in 1991, his essay “The Fate of the State” in 1996 and *The Rise and Decline of the State* in 1999.<sup>7</sup>

I will use the first two of these works to outline van Creveld’s concept of the dying state. First, in TTW he writes:

Whatever the exact meaning of the term ‘politics’, it is not the same as ‘any kind of relationship involving any kind of government in any kind of society’. A more correct interpretation would be that politics are intimately connected with the state, they are, indeed, the characteristic form that power relationships assume within the kind of organization known as the state. Where there is no state, as was the case during most of human history, politics will be so mixed in with other factors as to leave room neither for the term nor for the reality behind it. Even where the state does exist, only some of its actions are political by nature, whereas the rest are administrative or juridical. Thus, strictly speaking, the dictum that war is the continuation of politics means nothing more or less than that it represents an instrument in the hands of the state, *insofar as the state employs violence for political ends*. It does not mean that war serves any kind of interest in any kind of community; or, if it does mean that, then it is little more than a meaningless cliché.<sup>8</sup>

For van Creveld, politics is what states, and only states, do. War (as in van Creveld’s concept of “Trinitarian warfare” which I handled in part 1) is an instrument of organized violence used by the state to promote its own (political) ends. The state itself is an artificial creation, “Whatever the exact differences between government and state, both are artificial creations not identical either with the persons of the rulers or with the people whom it claims to represent”.<sup>9</sup> So, for van Creveld not only is politics tied with the state, the state itself is not identical with either the ruler or the people. In his “The Fate of the State” essay, van Creveld goes on to proclaim that, “The State, which since the Treaty of Westphalia has been the most important and most characteristic of all modern institutions, is dying. Where ever we look, existing states are either combining into larger communities or falling apart: wherever we look organizations that are not states are taking their place”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, The Free Press, New York, 1991; “The Fate of the State”, located at [http://www.d-n-i.net/creveld/the\\_fate\\_of\\_the\\_state.htm](http://www.d-n-i.net/creveld/the_fate_of_the_state.htm); and *The Rise and Decline of the State*, Cambridge, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> TTW, page 125.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p 36.

<sup>10</sup> „The Fate of the State“ p. 1.

This death is due to the fact that the “principle function of the state, as that of all previous forms of government, has always been to fight other states, whether defensively in an attempt to defend its interests or offensively to extend them.” The need to fight other states in turn played a “crucial role in the development of the state’s most important institutions” which include government bureaucracy. The French Revolution “led to the nationalization of the masses, and with that, to a drastic change in the role of the state in the popular consciousness”.<sup>11</sup> “Now it became an end unto itself, an earthly good in whose honor festivals were celebrated, monuments erected, and hymns composed and sung” Van Creveld then goes on to lament, “the willingness, occasionally even eagerness of people to fight for it and lay down their lives for it”, that is for the state.<sup>12</sup>

The state grew in power with its ability to wage war and this culminated in 1945 with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan. Contrary to what was thought at the time, nuclear weapons brought interstate war to a halt. “Much as they hated each other, they [pairs of various hostile states] each in turn saw themselves with their horns locked and unable to fight each other in earnest”. As proof of this thesis, van Creveld points out that “since 1945 no two first-rate states, meaning such as were armed with nuclear weapons, have fought each other”. Along with this he points out the “declining scale on which war was waged” by comparing the German Wehrmacht deployed to invade the Soviet Union in 1941 with the 1991 Gulf War coalition forces deployed.<sup>13</sup>

As the state lost its ability to wage war it “turned its energies inward” developing the “welfare state”, although van Creveld admits this tendency began long before 1945 . . . It was World War II that “really made the modern welfare state”. The state took over large swaths of the economy, “entire sectors were taken out of private hands and put into the hands of the state”. Big government took over even in the US (in spite of its “tradition of free enterprise and rugged individualism”) with the war on poverty and vast social programs in the 1960s. .

Then came the reaction, due to high taxes, inefficiency, high oil prices, and the general feeling that it was time “to get government off our backs”: One can almost picture Ronald Reagan (who played Jeb Stuart in *Santa Fe Trail*) marching under this cloak into the White House. Van Creveld ends this section with the re-emergence of *Laissez faire* capitalism.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. It is interesting to note that in regards to his analysis of the French Revolution, van Creveld was seemingly arguing the opposite in 1991 to what he is arguing here. See *TTW* page 36, „ a plausible case can be made that little change took place at all“.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p. 3. That this statement speaks volumes as to the implications of van Creveld’s views has not been commented upon, until now. Van Creveld seems only interested in personnel mobilization, not in combat/destructive power deployed . . .

<sup>14</sup> Ibid pp 5-6.

Not surprisingly, van Creveld also sees that approaching death of the state as being driven by technology as well. This “brought about decisive changes in the nature of the global economy” and the states “gradually lost control over their own currencies”. Communication and the internet which elude state control are also sources of state collapse.<sup>15</sup>

Finally van Creveld brings up the lack of being able to maintain public order, which he admits is “one of the states’s principle functions”, although if this function is the same as its function to wage war, - seen as protecting “its own integrity against internal disorder” - remains ambiguous. To justify this unclear argument he lists the usual tally of failed states along with those of the former USSR.<sup>16</sup>

To summarize briefly, van Creveld’s dying state thesis is that since the state has lost the ability to wage war against other states it has lost its principle reason for existence. Since politics exists within the system of the state, with the extinction of the state we will also see the end of politics as a specific concept. Other tendencies aide this development, or decline and death of the state, but they are secondary to the loss of the monopoly of waging war (including the monopoly of internal violence). As the state collapses societies will have to develop other institutions to replace this “artificial creation”. The market is seen as something outside the state, totally separate from it, existing in something like an adversarial relationship, so as to be the natural beneficiary.

In all this is a compelling and very simple picture, able in a superficial way to explain various current trends. On the other hand, the history of the Cold War shows us the mistake of assuming a deterministic theorizing of history and unquestioningly accepting an objective meaning to a subjective label. Economic determinism it should be remembered was assumed by the Soviets to assure the eventual victory of “socialism” over capitalism.

Thus in reality, being against imperialism did not make one a communist, any more than being against communism made one a democrat, neither did being a communist preclude one being also a nationalist. Just as then, today the various labels more often limit understanding than achieve it in a clearer way. One of the chief reasons for the collapse of Communism as an ideology was its use of reified and rigid deterministic concepts, which forced the observer to see what the theory allowed them to see, while remaining blind to what the theory covered up. In spite of the occasionally profound quality of their analysis, the Marxists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century were unable even to recognize the questionable assumptions behind their theoretical predictions, the close link, but also division, between theory and praxis was lost. With this thought in mind I start my critique of van Creveld’s dying state thesis.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid pp 6-8.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p. 8-9.

It is my intention here to show that Carl von Clausewitz offers us a much better alternative in how to look at the state than does van Creveld. Using Clausewitz's essay entitled "Agitation"<sup>17</sup> and *On War's* Book 8, Chapter 3B I will formulate the Clausewitzian concept of cohesion which offers a superior theoretical approach to dealing with the development of the state through history, as well as analyzing our current situation in a methodological way.

In dealing with a concept as deceptively complex as the state it is important to start with some basic concepts, definitions, relationships, and special cases. Thomas Hobbes saw the natural state of humanity as being war, the state or "commonwealth" allowed for the absence of war or "peace":

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of very man against every man. For WARRE, consisteth not in battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known; and therefore the notion of Time, is to be considered in the nature of Warre . . . So the nature of War, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, nasty, brutish and short.<sup>18</sup>

In his essay, van Creveld attempts to soften Hobbes's view, but here it is clear that for Hobbes something closely resembling the state is a minimum requirement for extended human existence, the situation without the state being civil war and destruction. The "state" as such is seen as being a basic requirement for civilization and thus far pre-dating the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. For Hobbes, as for Clausewitz, there is a clear distinction between war and peace with the establishment of the state, or return to peaceful relations between (or within) states as being the defining element.

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<sup>17</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, Princeton, 1992, pp 335-368.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Cambridge, 2000, Chapter 13 Section 62.

In line with Hobbes, Max Weber, who is a good authority on political and organizational theory, defines the state as:

*A political organization is defined as a domination organization when and in so far as its existence and the validity of its practices within a given geographical territory are guaranteed on a regular basis by an administrative staff's threat – and application – of physical coercion. A state is defined as a political organization with compulsory membership when and in so far as its administrative staff successfully claims a monopoly over the legitimate physical coercion necessary for the implementation of its laws and decrees.*

It would seem best to define the concept *state*, because it has attained its full development only in the modern period, in terms corresponding to its modern manifestation. However, . . . the state that we experience today is characterized by a changing content, and hence our concept should constitute an abstraction from the present state. Viewed in terms of its formal features, the state of today is characterized by administrative and legal orders – which can be altered through enacted procedures – and an administrative staff oriented to the flow of organized action.<sup>19</sup>

Notice in spite of the distinct perspectives – Hobbes defines the state in terms of its purpose, whereas Weber defines the state in terms of its means - the continuity between Hobbes's "common Power" and Weber's "domination organization". Weber defines "politics" as "striving for a share of power or for influence on the distribution of power whether it be between states or among groups within a single state".<sup>20</sup> Notice too that Weber's definitions are based on the "means" of the entities involved, not on their supposed goals or purposes.

Looking at the section quoted above several points come out: First, there is a distinction between the rulers of the "domination organization" and the "administrative staff" or apparatus. It is the character of this relationship which defines the nature of the "state" in question for Weber and also affects the level of cohesion for Clausewitz as will be indicated below. In fact, and my second point, it is only this modern apparatus of state bureaucracy that van Creveld labels the "state", sees as "dying". The actual rulers would remain unscathed, but without a governing apparatus, which of course begs the question how exactly – by what means - this "rulership" would be carried out.

Van Creveld's is once again an arbitrary, and not very useful distinction, based on simple confusion of terms since for Weber, who developed the concept, rational bureaucracy is an ideal type of modern administration common not

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<sup>19</sup>Emphasis is original to Weber. See Stephen Kalberg (editor) *Max Weber, Readings and Commentary on Modernity*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2005, p 230.

<sup>20</sup> Max Weber, „The Profession and Vocation of Politics“, in *Political Writings*, Cambridge, 1994, p 311.

only to government, but to business, the military and any type of modern organization. In fact one could argue from this perspective that modernity was an interacting process of Bureaucratization (computers make the best “bureaucrats”), Rationalization, and Disenchantment. Also contrary to van Creveld’s comment of equating Max Weber with a “naïve belief in the virtues of an ‘impartial’ state bureaucracy” (!) Weber’s view is actually the exact opposite.<sup>21</sup>

Third, in this Weber quote we have mention of his concept of “legitimacy” which is important since it provides the motive for people to follow the dictates of the state. To be legitimate the state must be seen as operating in the interest of the political community it represents. For Weber (and Clausewitz too as we shall see) legitimacy exists as a sort of sliding scale. Legitimacy is the means by which political associations establish *and maintain* their monopoly of legitimate violence within their distinct geographic area. This is necessary since no state could survive for long based on violence alone. Legitimacy is given by the people to their rulers, that is to those in power. As Weber writes, “Just like the political associations which preceded it historically, the state is a relationship of rule by human beings over human beings, and one that rests on the legitimate use of violence (that is, violence that is held to be legitimate). For the state to remain in existence, those who are ruled must submit to the authority claimed by whoever rules at any given time.”<sup>22</sup> Thus legitimacy for Weber is a precarious political achievement, something which can rise or fall based on the prestige of the state, how it is viewed by the people who submit to its rule. There is no objective quality to legitimacy for Weber, even states that we could consider “illegitimate” may be considered legitimate by those under their rule, while a “legitimate state” may collapse in revolution. The modern world, and hence the modern state, disenchanted and rational, has to survive without any transcendental qualities. It is this precarious situation that van Creveld condemns when he speaks of how the French Revolution “broke up the ancient feudal and ecclesiastic institutions; by atomizing society, it put the state in a much stronger position than ever before.”<sup>23</sup> What van Creveld seems to actually object to is the state having lost religious and traditional legitimacy (the sanction of the church and monarchs “ruling by the grace of God”). Such is the modern age, unless of course one assumes one’s political community (dare one call it a “state”?) to have the sanction of God.

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<sup>21</sup> „The analysis of social consequences of bureaucratization was one of Max Weber’s main preoccupations throughout his scholarly work. His famous essay on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, probably the best known of his works in the English-speaking world, ends with an almost apocalyptic vision of the eventual ‘mechanized petrification’ of Western individualistic societies, directly inspired by Nietzsche’s Zarathustra. For capitalism, despite its origins in religious world-views of a specific individualistic character, appeared to him to be inevitably allied to the forces of rationalization and bureaucratization, and, if not inhibited by counter-forces of some sort or another, might well end in the creation of a completely ossified social order. . .“ See Wolfgang Mommsen, *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber*, Chicago, 1992, p 109.

<sup>22</sup> « The Profession and Vocation of Politics », p. 311.

<sup>23</sup> „The Fate of the State“, p 3.

What of van Creveld's "principle function of the state, as that of all previous forms of government"? That is "to fight other states, whether defensively in an attempt to defend its interests or offensively to extend them?"<sup>24</sup>

Once again with Weber, we have nuance:

All political formations use force, but they differ in the manner in which they use or threaten to use it against other political organizations. These differences play a specific role in determining the form and destiny of the political communities. Not all political formations are equally 'expansive'. They do not all strive for an outward expansion of their power, or keep their force in readiness for acquiring political power over other territories and communities by incorporating them or making them dependent. Hence, as formations of power, political organizations vary in the extent to which they are turned outward.<sup>25</sup>

The US and Denmark as states will be quite different, as would Germany in 1939 be different from Holland in 1839. What determines the character of a particular state is not the fact that it is a state, but rather the nation or political community it represents along with their history influencing and being influenced by the interaction of ruler with apparatus. Also contrary to Weber's perspective of the state, or rather the *modern rational state apparatus*, we have van Creveld's view in other areas including . . . That is the state as van Creveld narrowly defines it, is a product of Western culture since that *anno mirabilis* 1648. . .

The 'state' in fact as a political institution operated according to a rationally enacted constitution and rationally enacted laws, and administered by civil servants possessing specialized arenas of competence and orientated to rules and 'laws', has existed with these distinguishing features only in the West, even though rudimentary developments in these directions have crystallized elsewhere..<sup>26</sup>

Weber was writing in 1920, which would have been one of the state's high points according to van Creveld's thesis. Also the ability of non-Western political communities to adapt and form states in the Western model could be likened to their ability to adapt to rational capitalism which was also specific to the West. One could argue that those non-Western political communities able to do both have been the most successful in integrating into a global economy, which is contrary to van Creveld's whole argument.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Max Weber, *Readings and Commentary on Modernity*, edited by Stephen Kalberg, Blackwell, London, 2005, p 232.

<sup>26</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Roxbury, Los Angeles, 2002, p 153.

We could go on with Weber's concept of legitimacy here and well as bringing in his theory of social action (action by individuals orientated to other individuals) with its four ideal types of social action (traditional, affectual, value-rational and instrumental-rational).<sup>27</sup> A more extensive analysis of these close connections between the thought of Clausewitz and Weber will have to wait for a future paper. What I wish to point out here is simply two additional points: First, for both Weber and Clausewitz, the state and all social institutions "die" when the people that rely of them cease to orientate their actions towards them, when the legitimacy associated with the particular state ceases to exist.<sup>28</sup> This will become apparent in regards to Clausewitz in my discussion of Clausewitz's concept of cohesion described below. The second point, and again contrary to van Creveld's deterministic view, is that the nadir of state legitimacy may have occurred in Western Europe at precisely the time when van Creveld assumes it was at its highest, that is in 1945. The resistance movements which had opposed the Nazis and collaborators were quickly de-politicized by the returning governments-in-exile which had sat out the war in relative safety.<sup>29</sup>

### The Clausewitzian Concept of Cohesion

This concept comes up in various forms in On War and Clausewitz's other writings. These include:

- Cohesion as the *moral* (think tribalism, nationalism) and *material* (think constitution, institutions, shared views of how to define "civilization") elements that make up the communal/social organizations of political communities, including the three ideal types discussed below. Cohesion here is Clausewitz's theory of politics which also includes the abstract concept of money..
- Cohesion provides the process behind which the center of gravities of both participants in a conventional war are formed. Lack of a center of gravity would indicate the inability to win decisively, which would include unconventional/guerrilla warfare.
- Cohesion is the target of strategy in that tactical success is extended by strategic pursuit in order to expand the sphere of victory and bring about the disintegration of the enemy. That is this target links Clausewitz's concept of tactics with strategy.
- Cohesion acts within the balance of power among various states, with an aggressor having to contend with all the other states having an interest in maintaining the status quo.

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<sup>27</sup> Max Weber, „Basic Sociological Concepts“, in *The Essential Weber*, p 329.

<sup>28</sup> „A ‚state‘, for example ceases to exist sociologically with the disappearance of the likelihood that particular forms of meaningfully oriented social action might occur. This likelihood might be very great or infinitely small. Together with the meaning and degree of this likelihood existing or having existed the relevant social relationship likewise exists or does not exist. There is no alternative and clearer meaning for the statement that a ‚state‘ exists or no longer exists.“ Ibid p 331.

<sup>29</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar*, Penguin Press, London, pp 63-69.

- Cohesion could also be seen as having an influence in the varying states of balance, tension and movement through which all conflicts proceed. At the most general level the concept of cohesion can be seen and providing the unifying concept which maintains the various elements of Clausewitz's general theory as part of a whole, the fields of attraction and tension that provides the general theory with its dynamic quality.

For our purposes here we are interested in Clausewitz's concept of cohesion as it pertains to the first point, the physical and moral elements of political communities, how cohesion acts in effect as a sliding scale of ever increasing concentration, integration and organization of a political community. We will be referring to two specific works primarily, these being Book 8, Chapter 3B of *On War* and the essay "Agitation", both seemingly written in the late 1820s, that is by the mature theoretician.

Clausewitz begins his introduction (Book 8 Chapter 3B) with describing how the "strength of will, characters, and abilities" of the states involved in a war can be quite varied. He gets to the actual concept by stating:

A more general and theoretical treatment of the subject may become feasible if we consider the nature of states and societies as they are documented by their times and prevailing conditions. Let us take a brief look at history.

The semi barbarous Tartars, the republics of antiquity, the feudal lords and trading cities of the Middle Ages, 18<sup>th</sup> Century kings and rulers and peoples of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – all conducted war in their own particular way, using different methods and pursuing different aims.<sup>30</sup>

The first paragraph sets the theoretical setting. The second introduces three distinct types: the Tartars, various kings/ruling classes in a historical sequence, and finally "the rulers and peoples of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". Why the distinctions? The very next words, the next paragraph reads:

The Tartar hordes searched for new land. Setting forth as a nation, with women and children, they outnumbered any other army. Their aim was to subdue their enemies or expel them. If a high degree of civilization could have been combined with such methods, they would have carried all before them.

The Tartars represent for Clausewitz what I would refer to today as the "ideal type" of an armed (stateless) nation. A people organized for war, but lacking a specific geographical homeland, meaning that they would also lack the territorial-based apparatus of the state. However they could have the "civilization factor" meaning socio-economic-technological development linked

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<sup>30</sup> All the quotes from *On War* listed in this discussion of Clausewitz's concept of cohesion come from Chapter 3B of Book 8 unless otherwise indicated.

with a “nation” that is a political community, making them unbeatable in war with other political communities.

What makes the Tartars distinct, is not their history, the point in time that they ruled, but their social-political organization, and the fact that they were not bound to a specific territory, that is were not a state, since they set forth “as a nation” in search of areas to conquer.

Clausewitz follows with the second type which includes “the republics of antiquity, the feudal lords and trading cities of the Middle Ages, 18<sup>th</sup> Century kings”, all these groups have a common trait being that they are made up (using Weberian terms) of a ruler/ruling class and a state apparatus of varying and ever increasing complexity or cohesion located within a specific territory. Rome is mentioned in this regard as well, but is different than the other republics of antiquity, since she spread not only by conquest, but also by assimilation.

The feudal levies lacked the cohesion of states, and were in reality “true confederation[s]”. Clausewitz goes on to describe this situation as “indeed, cohesion in the state was never weaker or the individual so independent. It was the combination of these factors that gave medieval wars their special character. Slowly, over centuries the “feudal system hardened into clearly delimited territorial sovereignty . . . The slow evolution toward this goal naturally brought with it numerous overlappings of these three military institutions. Under Henry IV of France feudal levies, *condottieri* and a standing army were used side by side.”<sup>31</sup>

A state of that type could not be said to be genuinely united; it was rather an agglomeration of loosely associated forces. Therefore we should not think of such a state as a personified intelligence acting according to simple and logical rules.<sup>32</sup>

At the time of the Hundred Years War, France was still not a “genuine monarchy”, but “an agglomeration of duchies and counties; while England, though displaying greater unity, still fought with feudal levies amid much domestic strife”. This process continued through the next couple of centuries

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<sup>31</sup> Notice that the reliance on mercenaries and feudal levies would constitute a low level of state cohesion for Clausewitz. I would argue that the US faces something similar today with the standing army being downgraded in pursuit of poorly formulated strategic goals, whereas the „gold-plated“ (but operationally useless) weapons systems (feudal levies) and politically well-connected mercenaries (*condottieri*) take the lion’s share of the defense purse. All indications from this perspective of a state in a process of disintegration.

<sup>32</sup> Here we see Clausewitz very much in line with Hobbes, „The only way to erect such a Common Power . . . is to conferred all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills by plurality of voices, unto one Will, which is a much as to say, to appoint one Man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person; and every one to owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, Shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in thsse things which concerne the Common Peace and Safetie, and therein to submit their Wills every one to his Will, and their Judgement to his Judgement“. *Leviathan*, Chapter 17, Section 87.

till by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Louis XIV controlled a mature standing army, whose organization was based on the power, money and cohesion of the state. "The states of Europe had achieved complete internal unity."

The executive had become completely unified and represented the state in its foreign relations. Political and military institutions had developed into an effective instrument, with which an independent will at the center could now wage war in a form that matched its theoretical concept.

The effect of this concentrated power, of this level of state cohesion, was that the monarchs looked on the state as their own private property, war became "a true game", but with very limited stakes since the armies were very expensive investments which could not be risked. Also the military only fought other militaries avoiding civilian areas. On the political side, interests of states interacted in a balanced power relationship and even the power that Louis XIV commanded could make little headway in these circumstances. Most importantly for Clausewitz, the people were considered to have no interest in the affairs of state, that is in politics. Significantly Clausewitz brings up the example of the Tartars once again, "The Tartar people and army had been one; in the republics of antiquity and during the Middle Ages the people had still played a prominent part; but in the circumstances of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the people's part had been extinguished".

The very next lines are important in indicating how this development reached a certain culmination:

War thus became solely the concern of the government to the extent that government parted company with their peoples and behaved as if they were themselves the state. Their means of waging war came to consist of the money in their coffers and of such idle vagabonds as they could lay their hands on either at home or abroad. In consequence the means they had available were fairly well defined, and each could gauge the other side's potential in terms both of numbers and of time. War was thus deprived of its most dangerous feature – its tendency toward the extreme, and of the whole chain of unknown possibilities which would follow.

War became very limited in its scope and objectives "due to the narrow base on which it rested" and very predictable since the amount of resources (financial and otherwise) were essentially known quantities. An attacking army would attempt to "seize an enemy province or two" and the defender would attempt to prevent this until the onset of Autumn at which time both armies would retire to their winter quarters. Friedrich the Great stands out at this time due to the risky nature of his endeavours and the boldness of his operations.

At this point in our analysis we have two of the three types of social-political entities described, the Tartar nation which is the combination of people, army and rulers moving about as a nation, but not tied to any particular territory, and

the ever increasingly materially cohesive state. Clausewitz finds this former type potentially the strongest grouping (“they would have carried all before them”), that is possessing a high level of moral cohesion, but limited due to the level of “civilization” / material cohesion that they enjoy. While they wage war effectively - this is simply an expression of their culture and their desire to live a nomad lifestyle, not to mention gaining what they need by way of pillage - they lack political purpose and the ability to form rational policy.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Clausewitz would doubt the ability of their military commanders to achieve any high level of expertise, “we will never find a savage who is a truly great commander, and very rarely one who would be considered a military genius, since this requires a degree of intellectual powers beyond anything that a primitive people can develop”.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand we have the state, starting with the states of ancient times and slowly, but consistently developing into the “mature states” of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This process was a long one and not without the potentiality of reversal, but acted as an ever increasing concentration of power in the hands of the rulers of the various states. The states went through a process of material consolidation or increasing material cohesion which allowed for ever increasing control and mobilization of the resources of the state. The indirect result was that the rulers came to view the state as their own personal property, which is contrary to the “nature” of the state which must also include the interests and participation of the people, according to Clausewitz, this being what we can term the moral cohesion of the political community to the state which is the state’s controlling apparatus. That is, following Weber now, the state requires legitimacy in the long-term to ensure its survival as a social entity.

Finally, the third type that Clausewitz mentions is the modern mass state, that is the ruling class using the apparatus of state control for a political community which feels its interests more or less represented by the leadership. This type of state, “the rulers and peoples of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century” dates from the French Revolution:

When the enormous majority challenged the minority in France, the nobility had to give way. It was no longer strong enough to resist this force. The Old Regime collapsed – and collapsed forever, because once an organic whole has been broken it may be glued together again, but its original unity can never be restored. The masses, furthermore, broke the sceptre that had ruled them so despotically, and set up a mixed government. This shattering of all social relationships, which were already under great strain, was much easier than the creation of a new regime, and it could be foreseen that after the violent upheaval there would be much groping around and that some decades would be needed

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<sup>33</sup> In Book 6, Chapter 6, Clausewitz describes 18th Century Poland as a „Tartar state“ with „their chaotic public life and their boundless irresponsibility“.

<sup>34</sup> *On War*, Book 1, Chapter 3.

to explore new ideas before a new form of government could put down firm roots.<sup>35</sup>

I would argue that the history of France from 1789-1871 very much proves Clausewitz' view to have merit. It would thus be unreasonable according to Clausewitz to expect a political community to develop a new state quickly to replace an old system of "social relationships" (or social action) which had been swept away. This would be even more difficult under a foreign occupation with the resulting government seen as imposed by and acting in the interests of the occupying power, that is enjoying little if any legitimacy/potential "core" of moral cohesion let alone any material cohesion. This element would be separate from the material ability of the new state to provide basic services and security (material cohesion) that the people had come to best expect from the previous state in question.

What most interests us here, and also interested Clausewitz at the time was the ability of this revolutionary government to mobilize and wage war at a level of power that "beggared all imagination", that is the amalgamation of moral with material cohesion by the leadership of a state for achieving policy goals through the use of organized violence.

Suddenly war again became the business of the people – a people of 30 millions, all of whom considered themselves to be citizens . . . The people became a participant in war, instead of government and armies as heretofore, the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance.

The result was an unbeatable combination of moral and material state cohesion under the control of a military genius who was able to combine the two positions as head of state and commander in chief – Napoleon. The shocking effect of this material and moral level of cohesive political power in turn caused a corresponding reaction, as Clausewitz writes, "Just in time, the reaction set in. The Spanish war spontaneously became the concern of the people." Clausewitz goes on to describe how the European states attempted to harness this source of power by rallying their people to defend their states against the might of France. It should be important to note that Clausewitz puts special emphasis on the case of Spain since it was the "nation" that reacted to the French invasion, not the Spanish state, that is the people rose up against the French occupation and carried out a popular uprising. Clausewitz sees popular uprisings as a 19<sup>th</sup> Century phenomenon and "an outgrowth of the way in which the conventional barriers have been swept away in our lifetime by the elemental violence of war. It is in fact, and broadening and intensification of the fermentation process known as war".<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> „Agitation“ p. 344.

<sup>36</sup> *On War*, Book 6, Chapter 26.

It is here with Clausewitz's idea of popular uprisings being a reaction to the aggressive political instrument of moral/material cohesion of the modern nation state that we have an interesting inversion which occurs in Clausewitz's theory, and links an additional aspect of the concept of cohesion. The French Army under Napoleon exhibited both material and moral cohesion, whereas the Spanish guerrillas who were the reaction to it could not equal the material cohesion of the French and in fact it was against their purposes to do so. They would have to operate more along the line of "Tartars", that is harnessing the "blind natural force" of a political community united in common effort, since it was not in their interests to become involved in a tactical defense along the lines of a professional military. As Clausewitz writes in his chapter on popular uprisings:

By its very nature, such scattered resistance will not lend itself to major action, closely compressed in time and space. Its effect is like that of the process of evaporation: it depends on how much surface is exposed. The greater the surface and the area of contact between it and the enemy forces, the thinner the latter have to be spread, the greater the effect on a general uprising. Like smoldering embers, it consumes the basic foundations of the enemy forces. Since it needs time to be effective, a state of tension will develop while the two elements interact. This tension will either gradually relax, if the insurgency is suppressed in some places and slowly burns itself out in others, or else it will build up to a crisis: a general conflagration closes in on the enemy, driving him out the country before he is faced with total destruction. . . .

A general uprising, as we see it, should be nebulous and elusive; its resistance should never materialize as a concrete body, otherwise the enemy can direct sufficient force at its core, crush it, and take many prisoners. When that happens, the people will lose heart and, believing that the issue has been decided and further efforts would be useless, drop their weapons. On the other hand there must be some concentration at certain points: the fog must thicken and form a dark and menacing cloud out of which a bolt of lightning may strike at any time.<sup>37</sup>

In terms of Clausewitz's general theory of war we have asymmetrical counter-action in which the defender attempts to resist the attacker imposing his will.<sup>38</sup> The guerrillas are on the strategic defensive, but operating offensively at the tactical level, avoiding being placed on the tactical defensive since that is not in their interest since it plays to the strength of their conventional opponent. Also they have a negative political purpose in denying the attacker his positive purpose, which is all the political purpose necessary in a popular uprising. This negative purpose on the defense is in fact superior to the offense with a positive

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> This treatment of symmetrical and asymmetrical counter-action is described well in Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle*, Oxford, 2007, p 105.

purpose.<sup>39</sup> It is interesting to note that Clausewitz warns that “a national uprising cannot maintain itself where the atmosphere is too full of danger” that is too exposed, as defined in terms of material cohesion. It is also “a natural law of the moral world that a nation that finds itself on the brink of an abyss will try to save itself by any means”, this moral world obviously referring to moral cohesion as a possession of a nation or political community. For Clausewitz it is the duty of the state to call forth the people to resistance, to initiate a popular uprising against a foreign invader, since for a state to allow “its people [to] go back to sleep in peace as soon as possible” after the “overwhelming feelings of failure and disappointment” of a major defeat is “involved in a major inconsistency”. That is the state as such is a failure in Clausewitz’s eyes since it fails to represent the interests of the nation/ political community it represents and thus deserves its fate. It would then be up to the people, as in Spain in 1809, to rise in revolt as a nation. In other words, the rise of modern guerrilla warfare can be seen as a reaction to the material/moral cohesion of the modern state launching aggressive wars.

It is here with the concentration of material cohesion that we see Clausewitz’s development of one of his most famous concepts, that of the Center of Gravity:

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 all our energies should be directed.<sup>40</sup>

And

A center of gravity is always found where the mass is concentrated most densely. It presents the most effective target for a blow; furthermore, the heaviest blow is that struck by the center of gravity. The same holds true in war. The fighting forces of each belligerent – whether a single state or an alliance of states – have a certain unity and therefore some cohesion. Where there is cohesion, the analogy of the center of gravity can be applied . . . But in war as in the world of inanimate matter the effect produced on a center of gravity is determined and limited by the cohesion of the parts. . . . There is a decided difference between the cohesion of a *single* army led into battle under the personal command of a *single* general, and that of an allied force extending over 250 or 500 miles, of even operating against different fronts. In the one, cohesion is at its strongest and unity at its closest. In the other unity is remote, frequently found only in mutual political interests, and even then rather precarious and

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<sup>39</sup> „let us just say this: that from the negative purpose derive all the advantages, all the more effective forms, of fighting, and that in it is expressed the dynamic relationship between the magnitude and the likelihood of success.“ *On War*, Book 1, Chapter 2.

<sup>40</sup> *On War*, Book 8 Chapter 4.

imperfect; cohesion between the parts will usually be very loose, and often completely fictitious.<sup>41</sup>

So the center of gravity is a product, but also a target, of material cohesion, but with moral cohesion also playing an important role. Ideally in symmetrical attack where the goal is achieving a decision, the attacker would launch his center of gravity against the center of gravity of the enemy, that is one cohesive mass against another. Thus by destroying that center of gravity, disrupting its cohesive capacity, one would most easily defeat the enemy in a single operation. Consider that also the situation where moral and physical cohesion would be at their greatest would be a “single general” leading a “single army” into battle. In modern military operations, this level of physical cohesion is only possible at the battalion level and below since most military action takes place today at the tactical level, in this way putting even more emphasis on moral cohesion.<sup>42</sup>

As mentioned above the “mutual political interests” shared by members of an alliance also forms a type of cohesion. Thus the concept of cohesion also has wider applications as well, as in the balance of power among states in general, not just among members of alliances:

If we consider the community of states in Europe today, we do not find a systematically regulated balance of power and of spheres of influence, which does not exist and whose existence has often been justifiably denied; but we certainly do find major and minor interests of states and peoples interwoven in the most varied and changeable manner. Each point of intersection binds and serves to balance one set of interests against the other. The board effect of all these fixed points is obviously to give a certain amount of cohesion to the whole. Any change will necessarily weaken this cohesion to some degree. The sum total of relations between states thus serves to maintain the stability of the whole rather than to promote change; at least, that tendency will generally be present.<sup>43</sup>

Therefore an aggressor will find himself at odds with various states, not just the target of his aggression, since all will find the status quo ante to be more likely in their interest than the new situation where the aggressor dominates and is able to exploit his victim. Cohesion also works towards the maintenance of the status quo among states, that is in a balance of power which the aggressor though his conquest upsets.

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<sup>41</sup> Book 6, Chapter 27.

<sup>42</sup> Rupert Smith refers to this as the „level of the fight“ which would be defined in terms of the relationship between the two opposing sides and the military aim of the side in question. See Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, Penguin, London, 2005, pp 317-18.

<sup>43</sup> Book 6, Chapter 6.

Before continuing with our discussion however, it would be interesting to consider what Clausewitz sees as the reason behind this radical social transformation, that being the inability of the French aristocracy to adapt to their new social reality/responsibilities:

If we now consider how the concept of the state has only evolved in recent centuries, how power has grown stronger at the top as fragmented lands combined into a unified whole, it becomes clear how – precisely because the estates grew closer to each other and were bound together in the unity of the state – the differences in their rights and duties became more evident and led to **tension**<sup>44</sup> . . .

All these privileges and rights were a natural right of his earlier condition, when he alone had been a citizen, and indeed the citizen of a free state in whose government he had shared. Then the mass of the people counted for nothing and the middle class for very little; now the masses had entered the ranks of those who counted, and the middle class joined forces with it. *Le nouveau peuple* had become four or five hundred times larger than *l'ancien peuple*, and in the eyes of philosophy, as of ordinary common sense, the enormity of its majority was the essential basis for its claims. <sup>45</sup>

The tension being the nobility and the other classes was due to them maintaining the privileges of their earlier status which no longer corresponded to their role in the increasing material cohesion of the state, and increasingly with the political community they claimed to represent. Contrary to the Middle Ages when the nobility had protected the community/state, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century they were hardly represented at all in the areas of middle class activity - commercial and industrial development – both of great importance to the material cohesion of the emerging state. Their privileged positions in the military and state bureaucracy were often characterized by inflexibility, incompetence and corruption. In fact Clausewitz lists the two main reasons for the French Revolution being “the strained relationship between the classes” due to the outmoded attitude of aristocratic privilege along with oppression of the peasants, and “the disorganized, biased and wasteful administration”<sup>46</sup> of the French state. This inability of ruling classes to adjust to their new social conditions of increasing material cohesion and the resulting political turmoil (loss of whatever moral cohesion exists) is an idea that was later developed further by both Karl Marx and Max Weber. Today the assumption is seemingly that we operate as a society in terms of economic relations, that is “the market”.

Which brings up the last element I will mention in connection with Clausewitz’s concept of cohesion. This is the effect of wealth or money on the powers of the state. Not surprisingly Clausewitz addresses the subject of

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<sup>44</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>45</sup> “Agitation” p 341.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p 345.

wealth with the example of 16<sup>th</sup> Century Spain, "What this colossus lacked in cohesion and domestic stability was made up for by its wealth."

In addition there is also this:

In the Middle Ages the power of the princes, whether great or small, was extremely limited. With the advance of culture, national wealth and working capital increased, and so did the power of the princes. Money can be thought of as acting like oil, which reduces natural friction and permit all forces to operate with much greater independence and flexibility. It was money that made it possible for the supreme authority in the state to pull together the forces it needed to strengthen itself, like the core of crystallizing mass

As money gradually spread and established itself though out society, providing the princes with the means to purchase personal services and to obtain them where they were cheapest, many sources of friction fell away. A mass of inertia that otherwise opposed the power of the state no longer needed to be overcome. Now the first great step toward sovereignty was taken. It consisted in this : that the princes acted alone, even if they might not yet decide alone. The estates had lost their function, but not yet their rights. Instead of the service they had contributed in the past, they now contributed money. . .

Thus supreme power in the state progressed toward absolute monarchy as we knew it in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>47</sup>

Money is what lubricates the machines of government/ domination, be it 16<sup>th</sup> Century Spain or 21<sup>st</sup> Century China. Money can compensate for a lot, but has its limits in terms of cohesion. Lubrication is separate from apparatus, so whatever influence on the actual machine's development would be indirect . seen perhaps in moral terms as a reflection mirrored in social action orientations. Clausewitz would of course assume actual wealth, that is at least instruments corresponding to real money, not mass swindles, of which he would have been well aware.<sup>48</sup>

It also in note here that for Clausewitz there exists a close relationship between the market and the state. The state provides the stability and dependability which the market requires to function adequately, in fact it is the growing material cohesion of the state which makes the modern market system possible. By use of money available through a stable market the state was able to more easily consolidate against individuals who may have otherwise resisted as Clausewitz's points out, the material interest in money making assuring compliance.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid p. 344.

<sup>48</sup> One would consider here John Law and his Company of the West.

## Some Radical Conclusions:

First, we need to reject Martin van Creveld's notion of a dying state and question the idea of "failed states" or "failing states" since these may hide actual and highly questionable political interests of those states using military options to deal with such entities as "threats". While some states may be dying, others are rising and it is in our best interest to be aware of this. Unless we have some sort of workable model of social organization to replace the state, all such theorizing is counter-productive and actually promoting hidden state interests, since the state is obviously here to stay in one form or another.

Second, Hew Strachan has written a courageous and important essay in "Strategy and the Limitation of War". Here he describes the current crisis of strategic theory. I would only add that strategic theory is in danger of becoming the handmaiden of very narrow political interest.<sup>49</sup>

Third, rather than the "death of the state" thesis, we would be much better served in studying the concept of "state" as opposed to "empire". Consider in this respect the work of Herfried Münkler.

Fourth, we need to question the alleged connection between democracy and capitalism/Globalization. Back in the days before economics acquired the trappings of a hard science, experts studied national economies to explain the reasons behind economic development. Karl Polanyi wrote in his classic *The Great Transformation*:

The separation of powers, which Montesquieu (1748) had meanwhile invented, was not used to separate the people from power over their own economic life. The American Constitution, shaped in a farmer-craftman's environment by a leadership forewarned by the English industrial scene, isolated the economic sphere entirely from the jurisdiction of the Constitution, put private property thereby under the highest conceivable protection, and created the only legally grounded market society in the world. In spite of universal suffrage, American voters were powerless against owners.

In England it became the unwritten law of the Constitution that the working class must be denied the vote. The Chartist leaders were jailed, their adherents, numbered in millions, were derided by a legislature representing a bare fraction of the population, and the mere demand for the ballot was often treated as a criminal act by the authorities. Of the spirit of compromise allegedly characteristic of the British system – a later invention – there was no sign. Not before the working class had passed through the Hungry Forties [1840s] and a docile generation and emerged to reap the benefits of the Golden Age of capitalism; not before an upper layer of skilled workers had developed their unions and parted company

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<sup>49</sup> Located at <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a790435549~db=all~order=page>

with the dark mass of poverty-stricken laborers; not before the workers had acquiesced in the system which the New Poor Law was meant to enforce upon them as their better-paid stratum allowed to participate in the nation's councils. The Chartists had fought for the right to stop the mill of the market which ground the lives of people. But the people were granted rights only when the awful adjustment had been made. Inside and outside England, from Macaulay to Mises, from Spencerr to Sumner, there as not a militant liberal who did not express his conviction that popular democracy was a danger to capitalism<sup>50</sup>.

The most obvious danger behind the "dying state" thesis is the death of politics, since with politics being tied to the state, the end of the state would mean the end of politics and thus democracy as well. We would then be at the mercy of the market or rather those who actually control it, leaving ourselves open to the "new serfdom" as Max Weber warned.

Fifth, it is time to stop ignoring economic interests when considering the actual reason why states go to war. In his latest book, Alan Greenspan finally stated the obvious when he wrote, "I am saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what everyone knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil".<sup>51</sup> It would be good to also recall that the US has a history of pursuing extensive economic goals along side political goals in past wars. The best example of this is US actions during WWI seizing German chemical patents and selling them in turn to US corporations, along with government support of expanding US trade in Latin America at the expense of not only German, but also Allied firms.<sup>52</sup>

Sixth, we need to consider the thought of the Russian Clausewitzian strategic thinker, Aleksandr A Svechin. He seems to provide a very necessary link between Clausewitz and our current situation. For instance, following Clausewitz closely he comments on the connection between the character of a government and the character of the policies they institute:

In our opinion, the claim that politics is superior to strategy is universal in nature. There is no doubt to a bright future and whose historical health is reflected in the form of a sound policy. But it always leads to doubts in states which represent the organized dominance of an obsolete class, which are on the historical defensive and whose regimes have become decadent and have been compelled to follow unsound policies and

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<sup>50</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Trasnformation*, Beacon Hill, Boston, 1944, pp. 225-226.

<sup>51</sup> See *The Sunday Times*, „Alan Greenspan Claims Iraq War Was Really for Oil“, September 16, 2007, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article2461214.ece>.

<sup>52</sup> A Michell Palmer, appointed Alien Property Custodian by President Wilson "secured the requisite amendment on November 4, 1918, just a week before the Armistice. Shortly thereafter he sold 4,500 lucrative patents at bargain-basement rates to the Chemical Foundation, a newly minted creation of the American chemical industry." As to Allied fears: „The suspicion exists in London, and causes some anxiety to His Majesty's Government, that the United States are inclined to use their political influence in Latin America to further their own commercial interests at our expense.“ See David M. Kennedy, *Over Here, The First World War and American Society*, Oxford, 1980, pp 312-14.

sacrifice the interests of the whole to maintain their domination. And in this case, unsound politics are inevitably followed by unsound strategy. This is why the protests of bourgeois military writers, particularly the French writers impressed by the fatal effects of the rotten politics of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Empire on strategy, are quite understandable. It is natural for strategy to try to gain emancipation from bad politics, but strategy cannot exist in a vacuum without politics and is condemned to pay for all the sins of politics. Only the September Revolution which toppled the Second Empire was capable of saving French strategy in 1870 from the fatal continuation of the political lien of the government of the Second Empire.<sup>53</sup>

This would also cover the character of a puppet government reflecting the very same character of the state that had instituted it. Svechin is also very informative on the close connection between economics and war, and how the character of mobilization reflects the character of any given war.

Seventh and finally, consider the relationship between the individual and the nation, and also the relationship between the individual (in terms of responsibility) and the state. Consider for instance the concepts formulated in Philip Allott's *The Health of Nations*.

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<sup>53</sup> Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy*, East View, M, p 85.