ON INDEXING ON WAR

by Jon Sumida

The index of On War offered here takes the form of a concordance—that is, a list of distinctive phrases or summary statements of particular propositions in Clausewitz’s treatise, organized by subject. Each distinctive phrase or summary statement is referenced to its place in On War by book and chapter, and by page number in both the Princeton University Press and Everyman versions of the standard translation of Michael Howard and Peter Paret. The subject headings include the titled subjects of all eight books of On War and a number of chapters. In these cases, the listing of distinctive phrases and summary statements is preceded by a listing of book title or chapter title with references to book or book and chapter. For the sake of convenience, seven elements of the subject heading ‘Moral Factors’ are listed as separate subjects, with the listing of distinctive phrases and summary statements of particular propositions of the latter included in the former. Where appropriate, distinctive phrases and summary statements of particular propositions are listed under more than one subject heading.

The main body of the concordance is preceded by a list of subject headings. The choice of subject headings was determined by the major concerns of Clausewitz, by the major topics of current critical discussion of On War, and by the judgment of the concordance compiler with respect to matters that have received relatively little if any attention but which are nonetheless concerned with the exposition of major argument in On War. The first category consists of subjects referred to by Clausewitz in his book and selected chapter titles. The second category includes such subjects as ‘Center of Gravity,’ ‘Dialectical Expression,’ ‘Escalation,’ and ‘Trinity.’ The third category includes such subjects as ‘Language, Limitations of,’ ‘Uncertainty,’ ‘Unconscious,’ and ‘Waiting.’ In order to reduce the number of subject headings for the sake of simplicity, a single subject heading has been used to cover distinctive phrases or summary statements of particular propositions that are about closely related matters. Translation problems are noted where the result is text that misrepresents significantly Clausewitz’s position.

This concordance offers considerably more than the existing indexes of the standard English translation of On War. The first edition of this work, which was published in 1976, did not have an

1 An abridged version of this index was published as “A Concordance of Selected Subjects in Carl von Clausewitz’s On War,” Journal of Military History, 78 (January 2014): 271-331. The unabridged text presented here differs from the published abridged text by providing references to book and selected chapter titles, and by incorporating a number of additional references, rephrased references, and minor corrections.


3 Boldness, courage, desperation, determination, military spirit/virtue, perseverance, timidity.

4 For which see Jon Tetsuro Sumida, Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to On War (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008; paperback edition 2011).

5 For example, ‘People’s War’ serves as a subject heading for all distinctive phrases and summary statements of particular propositions about arming civilians, guerrilla war, national insurrection, national militias, protracted defensive war, Spanish resistance to French occupation, and so on.

6 For the response of Peter Paret to one correction, see “Translation, Literal or Accurate,” Journal of Military History, 78 (July 2014): 1077-1080.
This shortcoming was partially repaired in 1984 with the publication of a slightly revised edition with an index of names and places, and a separate chronological index of wars, campaigns, and battles, compiled by Rosalie West. In 1993, a differently paginated edition of the Howard/Paret translation was published in the Everyman's Library series. West's indexes were retained with new pagination, but were otherwise unchanged. The lack of a comprehensive subject index integral to either of the Howard/Paret editions of *On War* prompted the production of two subject indexes by other parties: the “SAMS Conceptual Index to *On War*,” compiled by Seminar Four of the School of Advanced Military Studies, Seminar, Class of 1994-5, the latest redaction of which was completed in 1998, and a computer-generated “Word Index to Carl von Clausewitz’s *On War*” compiled by Christopher Bassford in 1998 and last updated in 2003. Both are intended for use with the Princeton University Press variant of the Howard/Paret translation, with page references that are not valid for the Everyman edition.

The SAMS and Bassford indexes consist of an alphabetized list of subjects with page references for each one. The SAMS index list approximately 900 key word and concepts, including many of the names, places, and operational events covered by the West indexes. The task of correlating key words and concepts to page references was accomplished by a team working over several months. The Bassford index list roughly 1,200 key words and word groups and includes all of the names, places, and operational events covered by the West indexes. The Bassford index used computerized word search action to correlate word and word groups to page references, which in cases of important subjects are numerous—for example, the term ‘defence’ is given 87 page references.

The concordance presented here lists over 2,800 distinctive phrases and summary statements of propositions (including repetitions) grouped under 65 subject headings. It does not include references to the material covered by West. The compilation of the concordance was initiated by the conversion of detailed notes made from the compiler’s repeated reading of the Howard/Paret translation of *On War* over the course of twenty years into the format described in the opening. The list of referenced statements was then greatly expanded by careful examination of the page references to selected subjects provided by the Bassford index. After this, the text of the Howard/Paret translation was reread to find additional statements that deserved referencing. The concordance thus represents a synthesis of manual and machine compilation.

In addition to providing references to the Everyman as well as Princeton edition of the standard translation, the concordance enables readers to access particular sections of the text with much greater specificity than the SAMS and Bassford subject indexes by breaking down the representation of a subject into its basic components—that is, distinctive phrases and individual propositions. This has several benefits. First, readers are provided with a means of quick reference to Clausewitz’s distinctive phrases and significant propositions. Second, the listing of propositions in the order in which they appear in the text with references to location by book and chapter as well as page, enable readers to gain a clear sense of the distribution of Clausewitz’s treatment of a subject at a glance. And third, the length of listed propositions provides an

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7 Howard and Paret noted that West’s index was modeled on the indexes of Werner Hahlweg for the critical German edition of *On War* published in 1952. The 1980 edition of this work contains an index to concepts and key words, for which see Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, ed. by Werner Hahlweg (Bonn: Ferdinand Dümmlers Verlag, 1980), pp. 1382-1403.

8 They are accessible on the Clausewitz Home Page [“Indexes to Clausewitz’s *On War*”: http://www.clausewitz.com/bibl/NDXs.htm].
indication of the relative importance of certain subject headings that would not otherwise be apparent from the formal outline of book structure given in the table of contents.

A fourth benefit is that a detailed inventory of the distinctive phrases and significant propositions that constitute Clausewitz’s view of a subject allow productive study of that subject that would otherwise be more difficult or even impossible. For example, this concordance provides a convenient means of identifying contradictory propositions put forward by Clausewitz in *On War*. This is the necessary prerequisite to the systematic assessment of the problem of incompatible statements, an issue that has been a source of major confusion and controversy.9 This concordance also enables readers to discern patterns of meaning that would otherwise be inaccessible. In *On War*, Clausewitz’s total view of many important subjects does not exist in the form of a single discrete proposition or explicitly connected set of propositions, but are expressed in numerous and scattered statements that describe the subject differently depending upon the aspect of the subject being considered or differing contexts. To comprehend Clausewitz’s complete view of a complex subject with contingent characteristics, a reader must come to terms with a multitude of separate elements and their relationship to each other. This concordance provides the means of juxtaposing all the separate elements that constitute Clausewitz’s representation of his thought about a particular subject in a manner that facilitates comprehensive inspection, which is the necessary basis for productive assessment of that thought.

The present concordance is not intended as the final word on indexing *On War*. It does provide a useful model for further endeavor, and pending the creation of a better alternative, offers a platform for more intelligent consideration of Clausewitz’s great work.

Jon Sumida  
Department of History  
University of Maryland, College Park  
28 December 2014

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9 Eugenio Diniz and Domicio Proenca Junior, “A Criterion for Settling Inconsistencies in Clausewitz’s *On War*,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2012, 1-24, First article,  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2011.621725](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2011.621725)
A CONCORDANCE OF SELECTED SUBJECTS IN ON WAR
(Version 2.1)
By Jon Sumida

Item order under each subject heading: Book, Chapter, Statement


Subjects

Army
Attack
Balance of Power (see also ‘Poland’)
Battle (see also ‘Tactics’)
Boldness (included in ‘Moral Factors’)
Campaign [Operations]
Center of Gravity
Chance, see ‘Uncertainty’
Concentration of Force
*Coup d’oeil*, see ‘Unconscious’
Courage (included in ‘Moral Factors’)
Critical Analysis (see also ‘History and ‘Theory’)
Culminating Point
Danger (see also ‘Moral Factors’)
Defense (see also ‘People’s War’ and ‘Waiting’)
Desperation (included in ‘Moral Factors’)
Determination (included in ‘Moral Factors’)
Dialectical Expression
Emotions (see also ‘Moral Factors’)
Equilibrium (see also ‘Waiting’)
Escalation, Danger of
Experience
Fog, see ‘Uncertainty’
Form of On War
Friction
General Staff
Genius (see also ‘Intellect’ and ‘Unconscious’)
Guerrilla War, see ‘People’s War’
History (see also ‘Critical Analysis’)
Human Nature (see also ‘Moral Factors’ and ‘Unconscious’)
Instinct, see ‘Unconscious’
Intellect (see also ‘Genius’)

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Intelligence, Military (see also ‘Uncertainty’)
International law
Intuition, see ‘Unconscious’
Language, Limitations of
Learning (see also ‘Critical Analysis’)
Maintenance of Fighting Forces [Procurement and Logistics] (see also ‘Army’)
Maneuver
Military Spirit/Virtues (included in ‘Moral Factors’)
Money
Moral Factors (see also ‘Genius’ and ‘Unconscious’)
Occupation (of national territory)
People’s War (see also ‘Defense’)
[Peter Principle]
Perseverance (included in ‘Moral Factors’)
Poland
Polarity
Strategy (see also ‘War, Planning’)
Subordinates
Supply, see ‘Maintenance’
Surprise
Tactics (see also ‘Battle’)
Talent, see ‘Genius’
Theory (see also ‘Critical Analysis’)
Timidity (included in ‘Moral factors’)
Trinity
True War, see ‘Absolute War’
Uncertainty
Unconscious (see also ‘Human Nature’)
Waiting (see also ‘Defense’ and ‘Equilibrium’)
War
War, Absolute
War, Real
War, Limited
War, Unlimited
War, Art of
War, Conduct of
War, Planning (see also ‘Center of Gravity’ and ‘Strategy’)
War and Politics/Policy
Warfare
Weapons
Directory

Army

Military Forces 
General Survey 
The Army, Theater of Operations, Campaign 
Relative strength 
Relationship between the Branches of Service 
The Army’s Order of Battle 
General Disposition of the Army 
Advance Guard and Outposts 
Operational Use of Advanced Corps 
Camps 
Marches 
Marches—Continued 
Marches—Continued 
Billets 
Maintenance and Supply 
Base of Operations 
Lines of communications 
Terrain 
The Command of Heights 
Army and commander one element of trinity 
Warfare comprises all related to fighting forces 
Resistance of the machine (army) 
Military machine—army—basically very simple 
No general can accustom an army to war 
Strategy must consider chief means: fighting forces 
Spirit/other moral qualities of army vary greatly 
Armies of all great powers equal in development 
National army 
Army with true military spirit 
Moral character of an effective army 
Boldness of an army 
Field largest possible army: not a platitude 
Army size determined by government not general 
Victorious army: greater losses from sickness than battle 
Army size and exertion 
National army—based on expansion of militia 
Contemporary armies identical in organization 
Great engagements as opposed to small engagements 
Powers of resistance of an army inferior in size 
Order of army entering battle no longer decisive 
Army in defeat, characteristics of 
Effect of defeat of army on people and government
Defeat and breaking of army moral strength
Axiomatic: army broken by defeat must be repaired
Points of view on military forces
Definition of army and theater of operations
Armies alike in weapons, training, and equipment
Infantry the main branch of the army
Enlargement of armies: more scope for strategy
Order of battle as regulating routine
Damaging effect of marches on fighting forces
Rapid movement: wearing out of army significant
For modern armies billets indispensable
Army in rapid assembly cannot conduct operations
For modern armies, supply of greater importance
Army and foraging
Supply a secondary concern in absolute war
Problem of fodder
Base in military operations: no general rules
Modern armies: brief cut of supply not serious
More forces divided, less they can be controlled
Professional army with qualities of national army
When terrain difficult, infantry the superior arm
Fear of our fighting forces cause enemy to retreat
Failure due to fear of enemy forces
Effect of disproportion of strength
Large towns army’s natural sources of supply
Enemy army: real ‘key to the country’
Army in retreat will suffer disproportionate losses
Defeat of army leads to loss of territory
Army more important than territory
Some division of forces inevitable
Difference between single army and coalition army
Army zone of operations/operational theaters
More than well-trained army required for attack
Army has modest advantage knowing it is attacker
Every army has strategic flanks
Army weakens as it advances
Army as center of gravity
Destroy enemy fighting force best way to begin
Destruction of enemy army if significant
Armies everywhere should expend full energies
Regular armies should be used in open country
Allied armies prone to suffer inertia, friction, etc.

Attack

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¹ Translation error: the phrase “mit dem Kriegs- und Feldzugsplan” [Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Werner Hahlweg, ed. (Bonn: Ferdinand Dümlers Verlag, 1980), p. 350] is rendered as “with the plan of campaign”—that is, the subject of war planning is omitted.
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Reduction of everything to formulas of equilibrium
Timidity implies loss of equilibrium
Opponents never in state of equilibrium
When fighting interrupted, equilibrium results
Distinction: balance, tension, and rest
Equilibrium can accommodate a good deal of activity
Acts less important when equilibrium prevails
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Escalation, Danger of
Propensity to escalate
Need to be prepared for absolute war
Know what kind of war one is getting into
Appeal to supreme tribunal—force
God of war may catch him unawares
Sharp sword versus ornamental rapier

Danger of foe who knows no law other than power

Transition from fencer to wrestler

Danger of thinking recent wars as blunders

Danger of ignoring danger of escalation

Come with a sharp sword and hack off our arms

True nature of war will break through again

Need to assess probability of escalation

Wage absolute war when general can or must

Experience

As indeed experience shows . . .

Experience teaches how to guard against oneself

Experience and sense of locality

Genius, experience, and observation

Experience of danger

Experience precisely determines judgment

In absence of experience, favor hopes and not fears

Theorist must learn to generalize from experience

Only experienced officers make right decisions

Experience only lubricant to general friction

Limited source of experience: foreign officers

Effect of a few experienced officers on others

Experience lends objectivity to impressions

Truth must be rooted in experience

Experience as military history

Life as a source of experience

Experience will never produce a Newton or Euler

Experience can produce a great general

Limitations of experience without education

Reference to experience in support of theory

Experience counts more than abstract truth

Nature of things only revealed by experience

Theory refers to experience to indicate origin

Need for thorough personal experience of war

Experience essential to understand execution of plan

Accept on faith what one lacks in experience

Experience and courage of troops

Long experience creates a knack of assessing information

Experience very source of particular conviction

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Moral Factors

The Principal Moral Elements

The Military Virtues of an Army

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Perseverance

Difficulty of gauging enemy will

Determination to render enemy powerless wanes

Will element in and product of strength

Highest moral factor courage

Boldness as a variant of courage

Courage and self-confidence as counter to uncertainty

Courage, self-confidence, daring

Courage and talent as element of trinity

Moral and material factors in war

Exhaustion of physical and moral resistance

Destroying enemy: moral and physical elements

Civilized society and military spirit

Courage is soldier’s first requirement

Two kinds of courage

Courage as a feeling or emotion

Boldness as a form of courage

Courage d’esprit

Determination limits the agonies of doubt

Propensity for boldness a kind of determination

Courage and determination

Determination a mental act

Determination is fear of wavering to suppress fear

Low intelligence precludes determination

Determination: strong not brilliant mind

Will required to overcome friction

Strong will and emotion

Commander courage revives courage of men

Greed for honor and glory

Courage and inflammable emotions

Self-confidence and skepticism

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³ In hierarchical organizations, individuals are promoted to their highest level of incompetence, for which see Laurence J. Peter, The Peter Principle (New York: Bantam, 1972).
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4 Translation error: the phrase “mit dem Kriegs- und Feldzugsplan” [Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Hahlweg, ed., p. 350] is rendered as “with the plan of campaign”—that is, the subject of war planning is omitted.
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5 For the translation problems of the Paret/Howard edition with respect to this proposition, see Jon Tetsuro Sumida, Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to On War (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008; paperback edition 2011), note 8, pp. 201-2.
6 For the application of this proposition to planning but not the conduct of war, see Sumida, Decoding Clausewitz, pp. xii-xiii.
War a matter of policy but governed by own laws  
Theory demands shortest road to goal  
What theory requires when aim defeat of enemy  
False intellectual system: geometric forms  
Emphasize general, leave scope for accidental  
To not understand essential elements of war  
Precept of all precepts: unity of conception/concentration

Timidity (included in ‘Moral Factors’)

Timidity and vacillation  
Implies loss of equilibrium  
Will do more damage than audacity  
Timidity and orthodoxy on one hand, rashness on other

Trinity

War is a remarkable/paradoxical [Strange] trinity

Uncertainty

Chance: very last thing war lacks  
Absolute factors not basis for military calculation  
Human nature finds uncertainty fascinating  
Theory should leave margin for uncertainty  
Uncertainty versus courage and self-confidence  
Chance countered by moral forces  
Play of chance and probability  
War is the realm of uncertainty  
Fog of uncertainty  
War is the realm of chance  
All information and assumptions open to doubt  
Chance at work everywhere  
More knowledge, less certainty  
Relentless struggle with unforeseen: intellect/courage  
Climate of war: danger, exertion, uncertainty, and chance  
Psychological fog  
Action can never be based on more than a sensing of truth  
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8 For the application of this proposition to the conduct of war but not to planning, see Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz*, pp. xii-xiii.
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War generally falls within boundaries of spectrum  
In war, subjugation the end, destruction the means  
Military operations appear extremely simple  
Whole monstrosity called war  
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War dependent on interplay of possibilities and luck  
War can be a matter of degree  
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Every age has its own kind of war  
Wide variety of situations that can lead to war  
Aims and means determined by particular conditions  
War conforms to spirit of age  
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War: can win first decision and lose on appeal  
Defeat of enemy, if possible, true aim of war  
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Levels of war: war, campaign, and battle  
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War, Absolute  
Absolute War and Real War  
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Impulse to destroy enemy central to idea of war  
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9 Translation error, for which see Sumida, Decoding Clausewitz, note 4, p. 214.
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\textsuperscript{11} For the application of this proposition to planning but not the conduct of war, see Sumida, \textit{Decoding Clausewitz}, pp. xii-xiii.
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