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Andreas Herberg-Rothe / Jan Willem Honig /
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Clausewitz

The State and War

Clausewitz's understanding of war was shaped by his understanding of the state, which he regarded as the central institution of modern life. His achievements as a theorist of war in turn clarify one of the state's essential activities: the use of force to defend and advance its interests and values, and those of the society it governs.

These diverse essays take Clausewitz's ideas about the state as the starting point for analyzing the central issue posed by his work: the relationship between war in all its manifestations, and politics in all its forms. The modern state was the starting point for Clausewitz's understanding of politics, but did not unduly confine his outlook, nor cause him to suppose that only states make war. Similarly, while it is the wars of states that provided most of the historical evidence on which his theoretical work rests, the implications of that work can be seen to encompass political violence in all its forms. It is for this reason that it continues to inspire reflection and admiration to this day.

CONTENTS

- **Andreas Herberg-Rothe:** Clausewitz's Concept of the State
- **Jan Willem Honig:** Clausewitz and the Politics of Early Modern Warfare
- **Anders Palmgren:** Clausewitz's Interweaving of Krieg and *Politik*
- **Andreas Herberg-Rothe:** The State and Existential War
- **Daniel Moran:** Late Clausewitz
- **Murielle Cozette:** Reading Clausewitz: Raymond Aron's Interpretation of *On War*
- **Antulio J. Echevarria II:** The Cold War Clausewitz
- **Andreas Herberg-Rothe:** Clausewitz and the Model of the Democratic Warrior

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