

**CLAUSEWITZ AND THE
AFGHAN
COUNTERINSURGENCY: AN
OLD PRUSSIAN AND A
MODERN, DIRTY WAR**

**THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF
SEPTEMBER 11TH**

MARK SILINSKY

US ARMY

AGENDA

Caveats

Why is Clausewitz important today?

The military greats

War is politics

The trinity

The center of gravity

The fog of war

Friction

CLAUSEWITZ

Why is he important?

The military greats and the great military thinkers

Clausewitz the genius

Amazon.com

The difficulty in reading Clausewitz

The contributions he has made to the study of war

Assumption: Clausewitz meant what he wrote in On War

WAR IS POLITICS

War is politics by other means

Afghanistan is politics-rich environment

There is the domestic agenda of pro-Coalition Forces

Agenda of non-Afghan Coalition Forces

Agenda of Taliban and other insurgents

Agenda of Pakistan, the ISI, Section S, retired ISI officers

Agenda of Iran, IRGC

Agenda of NGOs

All have political agendas and all agendas change

TRINITY- NATION

Clausewitz used the term to mean the sum of the people, their passions, and their allegiances in a state

Would Clausewitz have seen his primary identity as Prussian or German?

French examples

Is there an Afghan nation?

US nation building, 3-24, shift in focus after 9/11

Somalia and nation building

Afghanistan and nation building

Multi-sector human development

TRINITY-STATE

The state grew in importance since 1648

Frederick the Great

The French state under Napoleon

The Afghan state under Karzai

The role of the Karzai vice war lords and Omar

A key goal of COIN is to strengthen legitimacy of the government

TRINITY-THE ARMY

Professionalism and competence

The historic role of the Army in Afghanistan

Militia and warlord system

US Army took the lead in developing the Army

Center of gravity became mentoring

Nation building became a part of Army building

Set goals and did fairly well

CENTER OF GRAVITY

Clausewitz used the term in two ways: most important element in a battle to determine victory; most important element in an army to lead it to victory

May be physical or non-physical

Lee at Gettysburg

What is the center of gravity in an insurgency?

What is the center of gravity in Afghanistan?

CLAUSEWITZ, VIETNAM, AND AFGHANISTAN

The US approach had similarities- PRTs and CORDS- in winning the hearts and minds of the nation

There were difficulties with government leaders- the state

Focused on developing an army with different levels of success

Both Taliban and NLF/VC and NVA had extensive networks and sources of external support. Waziristan and Cambodia

What were the centers of gravity in both wars?

CONCLUSIONS

Clausewitz's ideas are eternal and relevant for Afghanistan

His basic ideas form a solid prism to view insurgencies and counterinsurgencies

The battle for Afghanistan is a political and military battle and involves the state, the nation, and the Army