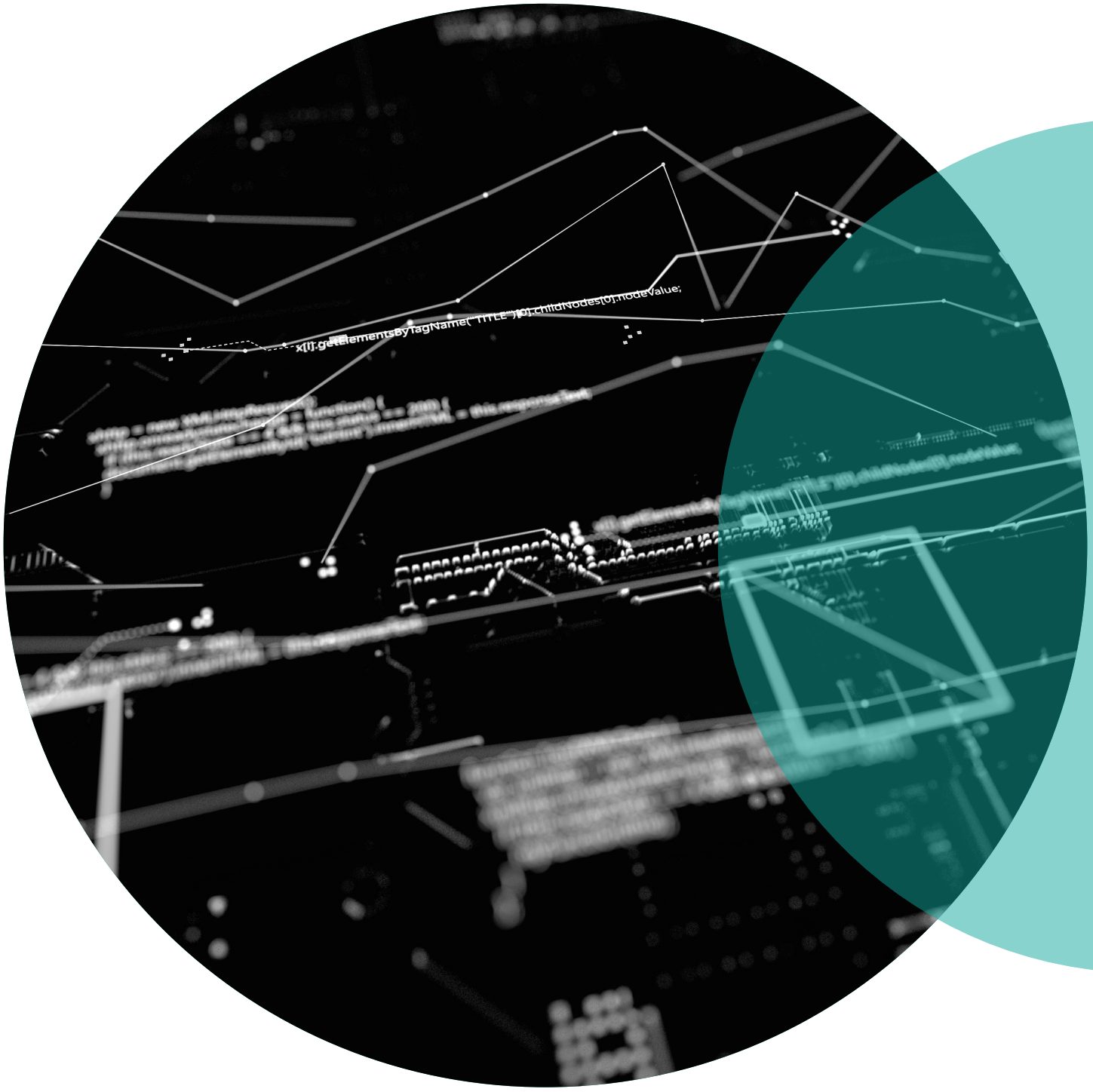
Hybrid CoE Working Paper 15

The relevance of Clausewitzian theory in hybrid war: The Iranian-Saudi rivalry



Hybrid CoE

Arthur de Liedekerke & Maarten Toelen – March 2022

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The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
tel. +358 400 253800 | www.hybridcoe.fi

ISBN (web) 978–952–7472–18–7
ISBN (print) 978–952–7472–19–4
ISSN 2670–160X

March 2022

Cover photo: Pinkeyes / Shutterstock.com

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Foreword

Hybrid CoE COI Strategy and Defence researches, analyzes and discusses questions concerning the conceptualization of "hybridity" in violent human interactions through different lenses and different war theorists such as Clausewitz, Boyd et al. This Hybrid CoE Working Paper aims at starting a publication line in which authors from different backgrounds interpret hybrid threats and warfare in the light of such scholars of war. If you are interested in publishing your ideas and interpretations, please contact soenke.marahrens@hybridcoe.fi.

Abstract

Driven by an exponential growth in information technology, societal interconnectivity and (economic) globalization, recent policymaking on emerging security challenges – such as cyberattacks, disinformation and ambiguous low-level conflict – seems to increasingly distance itself from the key tenets of traditional strategic scholarship.

Although 21st-century conflict might indeed be completely different from the traditional theatres of war, the fundamental nature of human and political confrontation has not undergone such dramatic alteration. As such, policymakers and scholars alike should embrace – rather than disavow – the lessons of the past and should not (yet) cast aside the Clausewitzian theory of war.

Carl von Clausewitz – a General in the Prussian army, who served during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) – is primarily known for his theoretical work on the nature of war. Published posthumously and unfinished, *Vom Kriege* earned Clausewitz a reputation that still echoes through time. Within his work, Clausewitz meticulously outlined the complex interplay between the political, military, and psychological aspects of war.

Clausewitz deemed war to be predominantly a human construct shaped by the social and political forces giving rise to it. This instrumental relationship between war and politics is best summarized in what is perhaps the most famous quote from his entire multi-volume ensemble: "War is merely the continuation of politics with other means." What differentiates war from other political instruments, however, is the use of force. While Clausewitz considered war to be inherently violent, instrumental and political in nature, he failed to quantify these defining terms within his magnum opus.

As will be argued in this paper, Clausewitz's concepts, and ideas – time-worn as they might be for some – continue to retain some of their validity in modern-day conflict. In his writing, Clausewitz contextualized war as one of the many political instruments available to nation-states in pursuit of their political objectives.[1]

The reality of contemporary conflict – characterized among other things by ambiguity and net-centric warfare – has resulted in post-Clausewitzian sentiments among modern scholars. As interesting as these contributions might be, they (mistakenly) invalidate Clausewitzian precepts by focusing on the quantification, threshold of force and violence that is allegedly needed to qualify a situation as war.

Coker and others argue that the ambiguous (non-kinetic) nature of contemporary war, and new technological means of warfare, have somehow fundamentally altered the very nature of war.[2] In line with such reasoning, some

1. A. Schu, 'What is War? A Reinterpretation of Carl Von Clausewitz's "Formula"', Revue française de science politique, Volume 67, Issue 2 (2017): 20.
2. C. Coker, Rebooting Clausewitz: On War in the 21st Century (Hurst & Company, 2017); J. Scott, 'Often quoted but seldom understood – The relevance of Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity to professional military education in the Canadian forces', Canadian Forces College (2013): 37; A. Haggman, 'Clausewitz and cyber security: towards a new trinity?', Strife, 13 February 2014, https://www.strifeblog.org/2014/02/13/clausewitz-and-cyber-security-towards-a-new-trinity/. [Unless otherwise indicated, all links were last accessed on 18 February 2022.]

scholars have also questioned the Clausewitzian trinity due to the growing importance of non-state actors and private entities in contemporary warfare.[3] Rid and others argue that acts of modern warfare do not reach the threshold of Clausewitzian war in their own right, as they fail to comply with all the defining criteria of war.[4] Rid's argumentation is, however, largely focused on the necessity of human casualties – as the absolute manifestation of force – without due consideration of the fact that, according to Clausewitz, war is merely a political instrument to compel an opponent to fulfil certain political objectives – with any form of force that is deemed necessary.

Against this conceptual backdrop, the embittered Saudi-Iranian relationship provides an interesting case study to refute such post-Clausewitzian stances and demonstrate their contemporary relevance. Whereas the advent of new technologies and ambiguous means of warfare might indeed have added a new dimension to the conflict between both regional powers, the instrumental and political nature of the enduring conflict remains largely unaltered.

3. M. Creveld, The Transformation of War (New York: Free Press,1991), 89; C. Bassford, 'John Keegan and the Grand Tradition of Trashing Clausewitz: a Polemic', War in History Journal, Volume 1, Issue 3 (1994): 319–320.
4. T. Rid, Cyber War Will Not Take Place (Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

Introduction[5]

While some have characterized the regular flare-ups in animosity between Iran and Saudi Arabia as acts of 'hybrid war', others have defined them as acts of 'proxy' or 'low-level' war.[6] Regardless of the chosen terminology, each of these labels seems to imply – albeit to varying degrees – a disavowal of the traditional tenets of the Clausewitzian theory of war.[7]

In his writings, Clausewitz contextualized war as one of the many political instruments available to states in pursuit of their political objectives. What differentiated war from all of these other political instruments would be known as the 'use of force'. While the exact interpretation of this concept remains subject to political and legal debate, Clausewitz did consider it to be inherently violent, instrumental, and political in nature.[8] However, he omitted – whether deliberately or not – to quantify any of these defining terms within his magnum opus. In other words, while the state of war is defined by using force, the exact scope or peculiarities thereof remain open to interpretation and the zeitgeist of the era.

Consequently, Clausewitz appeared to have already recognized that the use of minimal force to achieve certain political objectives could fall under the rubric of war. Be that as it may, standing interpretations of the use of force – and war in consequence – still seem to rest on the necessity of an evident and vast military intervention, resulting in significant human or material harm.[9] While such reasoning is understandable from a historical and political point of view, it fails to recognize the fact that Clausewitz regarded war as a simple policy instrument to compel an opponent to adhere to certain political objectives without defining strict interpretive denominators.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to highlight that the nature of war is unlikely to change, regardless of evolutions in the tactics and instruments used to wage it. Presaged by Clausewitz as early as the 18th century: "every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconceptions."[10] Building on the key tenets of Clausewitzian theory, this paper also aims to demonstrate that the recurring incidents between Riyadh and Tehran effectively constitute a low-intensity, low-level war, fought through novel and hybrid means of warfare. Elaborated below, this notion is a departure from more conventional accounts of the geopolitical animosity between the two countries that tend to downplay it as a mere dispute, rivalry or proxy conflict. As such, this paper emphasizes a different way in which policymakers and strategists could approach the issue of hybrid war, with the authors offering some recommendations to that effect in their concluding remarks.

5. The authors of this working paper are writing in a strictly personal capacity and the views expressed in this paper should not be construed as representing that of their professional or academic affiliations.
6. M. Fisher, 'How the Iranian-Saudi Proxy Struggle Tore Apart the Middle East', The New York Times, 19 November 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/world/middleeast/iran-saudi-proxy-war.html.
7. Coker, Rebooting Clausewitz; Rid, Cyber War Will not Take Place, 2.
8. D. Whetham, '"Are We Fighting Yet?" Can Traditional Just War Concepts Cope with Contemporary Conflict and the Changing Character of War?', The Monist, Volume 99, Issue 1 (2016): 60.
9. Rid, Cyber War Will not Take Place, 5.
10. C. Clausewitz, On War, a translation by M. Howard & P. Paret (Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.

The Saudi-Iranian feud

When analyzing the strained relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia, one quickly realizes that the contemporary foreign and domestic policies of both regional powers are hardly reconcilable. The two countries have not always been at odds, however. Before the late 1970s, the relationship between the Pahlavi – the last reigning Iranian dynasty – and the Saudi kingdoms was largely cooperative. Although minor disputes did occur over oil prices and territorial claims in the Persian Gulf, these were mainly resolved through peaceful dialogue, such as when Reza Shah revoked the Iranian sovereignty claims over Bahrain in 1969. The political and military alignment of both sides with the United States during the Cold War further strengthened the bilateral ties between both regional powers. That said, the unseating of the Pahvali regime in early 1979 by the popular Islamist movement radically altered the dynamics of this bilateral relationship. While Saudi Arabia was ruled by a deeply conservative monarchy in an uneasy concordat with the Wahhabi ultra-orthodox clergy, Iran established a revolutionary Islamic Republic with representative institutions and strong popular support.

Shortly thereafter, Saddam Hussein – the Ba'athist dictator of Iraq – started the Iran-Iraq War by invading the region of Khuzestan, with the aim of structurally weakening post-revolutionary Iran and securing the rich oil resources of the province. The United States and its allies, most notably Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, voiced their tacit approval of this course of action and provided several billion dollars' worth of economic aid, dual-use technologies, non-US weaponry and special operations training for the Iraqi war effort. This left the prospect of constructive engagement between post-revolutionary Iran and Saudi Arabia in tatters.

More recent incidents have heightened tensions even further. On September 14, 2019, for example, the Khurais and Abqaiq refineries were targeted by drone and missile attacks, an offensive that is widely considered a hostile escalatory move, orchestrated or sanctioned by Iran. Throughout this offensive, drones and cruise missiles were used in a coordinated manner to cripple the state-owned Saudi Aramco plants, the world's largest oil processing facilities. The ensuing damage temporarily knocked out half of the Kingdom's crude production. The United States and Saudi Arabia were quick to attribute the offensive to the Yemen-based Houthi allies of Iran, who officially claimed responsibility for the audacious attacks themselves. Later information, such as the trajectory of the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and an analysis of the equipment, which was declassified by the US, clearly indicated that Tehran was in fact behind the attack, which Iran continues to deny.

Against this backdrop, Riyadh and Tehran now increasingly and overtly compete for hegemony in the Gulf, with their contrasting viewpoints on geopolitics, oil prices, religious leadership and international influence defining their increasingly hostile relationship. As tensions continue to fester – often manifesting in violent ways, ranging from mutual allegations of targeted assassinations to supporting opposing factions in nearby conflicts or even cyberattacks on critical infrastructure – the question remains as to why such a conflict seems to be excluded from the tug of war.

After all, the long-standing feud between Saudi Arabia and Iran clearly adheres to Clausewitzian reasoning. While neither country has ever declared a formal state of war, their respective acts of force remain incited by domestic politics, taking place against a broader geopolitical context. As such, the state of war is a tangible reality for the Iranian and Saudi peoples and for the Saudi soldiers deployed in Yemen or the Iranian forces in the Strait of Hormuz. As Clausewitz wrote: "no one formally starts a war without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it." In other words, the formal state of war, declared under international law, is no absolute precondition for Clausewitz's interpretation of the use of force.[11]

11. M. N. Mirza, H. Abbas & I. H. Qaisrani, 'Structural Sources of the Saudi-Iran Rivalry and Competition for the Sphere of Influence', *SAGE Open*, Volume 11, Issue 3 (2021).

War by any another name would still be war

Recognizing this more nuanced understanding of what war is and is not, one could raise the question of whether the Abqaiq–Khurais offensive would fall within its scope. With over a dozen confirmed missile impacts, the offensive was clearly violent and instrumental in nature, significantly disrupting the oil production of Saudi Arabia as a consequence. Although the United States, European powers and Saudi Arabia accused Iran and the Houthis, the culprits behind the attack withdrew to the shadows and avoided definitive international attribution.

The question that remains, in accordance with Clausewitzian theory, is whether these attacks pursued a political purpose. In this context, one could reasonably argue that Iran chose to retaliate against the maximum pressure strategy of the Trump administration, and the collapse of the nuclear deal, by demonstrating its ability to indirectly harm the US and its allies, and the global economy as a result.[12] Another explanation is that Tehran was seeking to influence oil politics and regional politics by sending a clear warning to Saudi customers – many of which were previously purchasers of Iranian crude – that they should not take their supply for granted.

Regardless of the exact rationale for Iran's part in (facilitating) this offensive, Clausewitz would certainly place it under his conceptualization of war. After all, according to Clausewitz: "war is never an isolated act, the political objective is the goal, war is just a means of reaching it."[13] In line with this reasoning, the rationale for and modalities of the Abqaiq-Khurais offensive – such as scale, methods and sophistication[14] – imply advanced (target acquisition and reconnaissance) capabilities as well as the willingness to ambiguously deploy them in pursuit of political objectives. In short, refusing to recognize the ugly face of war behind this offensive risks encouraging a sentiment of impunity and the increasing use of hybrid tactics.

12. F. W. Kagan, 'Attribution, intent and response in the Abqaiq attack', Critical Threats Project (American Enterprise Institute, 2019).
13. C. Clausewitz, *On War*, (Dümmlers Verlag, 1832), 252–258; G. Dimitriu, 'Clausewitz and the politics of war: A contemporary theory', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 43, Issue 5 (2020): 650.
14. For an in-depth study on the game-changing potential of drone warfare capabilities for real-world battlefields, see Hybrid CoE's recent paper on this topic: F. C. Sprengel, 'Drones in hybrid warfare: Lessons from current battlefields', Hybrid CoE Working Paper 10, June 2021, https://www.hybridcoe.fi/publications/hybrid-coe-working-paper-10-drones-in-hybrid-warfare-lessons-from-current-battlefields/.

On hybrid war

Even in the absence of an official definition, in keeping with Clausewitz's theory, hybrid war can be conceptualized as a coordinated and synchronized application of force below the accepted but outdated thresholds of traditional war, seemingly defined by human casualties or material damage, by employing a wide range of military and non-military instruments to achieve political objectives, most notably through the instrumentalization of cyberspace as an instrument of warfare.[15]

Although the notion of hybrid war is nothing new, it did gain a level of unprecedented popularity around the time of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, with scholars of war arguing that it altered the very nature of war. This view is founded on the belief that contemporary conflict has somehow transformed into a post-Clausewitzian era in which kinetic and direct (military) confrontation would no longer fall within the established rational and political calculus.[16] In other words, the reality of contemporary conflict is increasingly evoking post-Clausewitzian sentiments, arguing that the ambiguous (non-kinetic) nature of contemporary conflict and novel (net-centric) means of warfare fail to reach the traditional thresholds of what war is supposed to be, and what it is not supposed to be.[17]

Regardless of the popular hypernyms, be they hybrid, proxy or low-level, that increasingly dictate the study of 21st-century conflict, Clausewitz already recognized that fighting determines the nature of the weapons employed and these, in turn, influence the conflict.[18] As such, he was far from static in his perception of war, and recognized its ever-changing nature – colourfully embellishing it with the words: "War is more than a true chameleon."[19]

According to Clausewitz, every age simply had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconceptions.[20] What remained peculiar to war, however, was simply the nature of its means. As such, the question of whether and how states clash, be it in front-line trenches or in the obscurity of cyberspace, is irrelevant under Clausewitz's conceptualization of war.

Recognizing that the tactics and means of war indeed change over time, the simmering conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran bears little resemblance to the kinetic conflict of the past, let alone to the outright hostility between

15. L. Freedman, *The Future of War; A History* (Public Affairs, 2017), 226; D. B. Nyemann & H. Sorensen, 'Going Beyond Resilience: A revitalized approach to countering hybrid threats', Hybrid CoE Strategic Analysis 13, January 2019, https://www.hybridcoe.fi/publications/hybrid-coe-strategic-analysis-13-going-beyond-resilience-a-revitalised-approach-to-countering-hybrid-threats/, 5.
16. S. Rusnakova, 'Russian New Art of Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine', *Slovak Journal of Political Science*, Volume 17, Issue 3–4 (2017): 3; S. Zilincik & I. Pikner, 'Clausewitz and Hybrid Warfare' (University of Brno, 2018), 16–17; K. Green, 'Does War Ever Change? A Clausewitzian Critique of Cyber Warfare', E-International Relations, 28 September 2020, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/09/28/does-war-ever-change-a-clausewitzian-critique-of-hybrid-warfare/; E. Landmeter, 'The relevance of Clausewitz's "On War" to today's conflicts', *Militaire Spectator*, 26 July 2018, https://www.militairespectator.nl/thema/strategie/artikel/relevance-clausewitzs-war-todays-conflicts.
17. Coker, *Rebooting Clausewitz*; Scott, 'Often quoted but seldom understood', 37; Haggman, 'Clausewitz and cyber security: towards a new Trinity?'.
18. Clausewitz, *On War*, 127.
19. Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.
20. Clausewitz, *On War*.

both regional powers in the 'Tanker Wars' of the 1980s.[21] In terms of tactics, emphasis has been placed on flexibility, plausible deniability, ambiguity and the calibrated use of force.[22] A similar development is evident with regard to the means of warfare that are now deployed. Although infantry battalions or armoured brigades once shaped the outcome of a conflict, cyberattacks, the use of UAVs, explosive remote-controlled boats, waterborne improvised explosive devices (IEDs), or (dis)information campaigns are now preferred to conventional military operations.

Regardless of the novel nature of these means of warfare, they remain but a contemporary embodiment of the traditional theories and concepts of Clausewitzian war, merely supplemented by technological developments at the tactical and operational levels. Analyzing these innovative means of (hybrid) warfare in isolation thus neglects the centrality of the politics that still define the conduct of war.

The contribution of cyber to hybrid war

Cyber operations are one such technological development that still falls within the Clausewitzian paradigm of war, notwithstanding voices to the contrary. While precedents for the use of force in cyberspace are numerous, the spate of defacements and social media account hijackings between Saudi and Iranian hackers that occurred in late 2015 – shortly after Saudi airstrikes on Yemen in the context of Operation Decisive Storm – serves as a typical example.[23] Despite a lack of conclusive evidence, many of the malicious actors that orchestrated the cyberattacks on Iran's Fars News Agency and Saudi Al-Hayat's website are believed to be state-sponsored and to have acted under government instructions.[24]

While some might consider such offensives as falling short of 'traditional' war, one should remember that Clausewitz did envisage the involvement of the 'people' as an inherent element of his paradoxical trinity that defined the principal actors involved in war. Despite the apparent absence of (physical) violence, such actions are an undeniable embodiment of forceful action. When they are considered in the wider context of hostility between Saudi Arabia and Iran, they evidently align with a political objective to coerce and influence through the application of net-centric effects. Even if one accepts the centrality of human or material harm under the use of force, an infamous example of a cyberattack that intended to cause such damage was the 2017 operation against the Saudi Aramco Oil Company, namely against national critical infrastructure. This cyberattack was a clear example of the use of force within cyberspace, targeting IT systems that were designed to prevent the failure of a vital facility.

21. Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, 'Tanker War', https://www.strausscenter.org/strait-of-hormuz-tanker-war/.
22. For a discussion on the role of ambiguity in hybrid warfare, see Hybrid CoE's paper on this topic: A. Mumford, 'Ambiguity in Hybrid Warfare', Hybrid CoE Strategic Analysis 24, September 2020, https://www.hybridcoe.fi/publications/hybrid-coe-strategic-analysis-24-ambiguity-in-hybrid-warfare/, 24.
23. S. Sardarizadeh, 'Iran-Saudi Tensions Erupt in "Cyberwar"', BBC, 3 June 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36438333.
24. Recorded Future, 'The Iranian-Saudi Conflict and Its Cyber Outlet', 26 June 2015, https://www.recordedfuture.com/iranian-saudi-cyber-conflict/.

By attempting to sabotage these industrial control systems – but failing to do so due to an error in the malicious code – one could rightfully ask whether such acts should be regarded as acts of war. In this context, security researchers agree that Iran may have intended to discourage foreign and domestic investments in Saudi Arabia by harming the country's petrochemical industry.[25] Regardless of the means that were adopted, the political and instrumental nature of conflict is once again evident.

Following this line of reasoning, the very notion of hybrid war fits perfectly with the more nuanced Clausewitzian notion of war, elaborated above. After all, the ambiguous and deniable use of force in pursuit of desired political objectives, regardless of its exact violent nature, conforms to Clausewitz's main theories and concepts of war. Although the contemporary use of force might indeed be more complex, nuanced and characterized by a certain degree of plausible deniability, it would still qualify as war according to Clausewitz.

25. C. Krauss & N. Perlroth, 'A Cyberattack in Saudi Arabia had a Deadly Goal. Experts Fear Another Try', *The New York Times*, 15 March 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/technology/saudi-arabia-hacks-cyberattacks.html.

Conclusions and recommendations

To conclude, Clausewitz deliberately omitted to quantify the level of violence needed to achieve the state of war, and argued that war amounts to any form of violence that is deemed necessary to achieve political objectives. Using the prism of hybrid warfare to analyze contemporary conflicts blurs the interbellum between conflict and peace to an extent that Clausewitz could not have imagined. Paradoxical as it might sound, recognizing hybrid warfare as war may very well curb its usage and strengthen international stability as a consequence.

While it should be made clear that this paper does not seek to advocate 'more' war, nor does it dispute the evolving nature of warfare, it suggests calling a spade a spade to discourage excessive 'hybrid adventurism'. In this context, three recommendations are put forward to serve as food for thought for policymakers and security experts alike.

First and foremost is the need to rein in the surge of academic works and policy papers on the concept of hybrid war. To date, there is no consensus on what constitutes "hybrid war" exactly. As argued by Klijn and Yüksel: "the problem with catchy buzzwords is that once they have been coined, they tend to stick around, even when they are unhelpful."[26] An excessive focus on this notion and its many derivatives risks causing more confusion and opacity regarding the study of war, despite it already being complex enough.

By focusing discussions on an alleged hybrid model of war, this paper aims to highlight the fact that policymakers and security experts should not be distracted by endless discussions on novel means of warfare, but should focus instead on the crux of Clausewitzian theory: the politics that define and shape war. In so doing, they should re-evaluate the deep-rooted strategic, geopolitical and ideological bases of conflicts – be they within Riyadh, Tehran or elsewhere. Following from this analysis, they should ensure that tactical-level discussions on methods, tit-for-tat incidents or the buzzwords that have shaped and continue to shape the conversation around hybrid warfare do not cloud the judgement of and responses to destabilizing events.

Next, as Nadia Schadlow argued: "the hybrid warfare concept gives many in the West the luxury of picking and choosing from a range of actions – a media campaign here, a cyber-intrusion there (and even the occasional political assassination) – and interpreting them as mere one-off isolated events."[27] Closer to home, one might have noticed how problematic that approach can be. In the case of Belarus for example, repeated and sometimes grave incidents have been pegged as "acts of hybrid warfare". With attention almost entirely fixated on the instruments by which Minsk is seeking to destabilize the EU – ranging from the cynical exploitation of migrants to the hijacking of a civilian aircraft – far too little attention has been paid to analyzing the rationale for Lukashenko's actions through a (geo)political prism.[28]

Concerns of possible escalations aside, these destabilizing events should be observed as part of a wider, long-standing pattern of subversive actions undertaken by the authorities in Minsk or elsewhere. A firm response going beyond

26. H. Klijn & E. Yuksel, 'Russia's Hybrid Doctrine: Is the West Barking Up the Wrong Tree?', Clingendael Institute, 28 November 2019, https://www.clingendael.org/publication/russias-hybrid-doctrine-west-barking-wrong-tree.
27. N. Schadlow, 'The Problem with Hybrid Warfare', *War on the Rocks*, 2 April 2015, https://warontherocks.com/2015/04/the-problem-with-hybrid-warfare/.
28. Ranging from forcing migrants to cross into neighbouring Lithuania to the hijacking of a commercial EU-bound flight.

time-bound and limited-in-scope restrictive measures could prove to be the only viable solution to genuinely deter similar actions. However, because the "hybrid war" trope and strategies to counter it tend to focus largely on methods, techniques and sub-threshold aggression, truly decisive measures have yet to be adopted.

Finally, EU and NATO members should bolster their ability to work together and formulate meaningful, comprehensive and long-term strategies to tackle conflicts, particularly those that can have systemic consequences such as the potential Saudi-Iranian deflagration. Over the past few years, it has become apparent that the severity of aggressions plaguing their relationship has been escalatory in nature. A major war in the region – once a remote possibility – could very well be a plausible scenario. Rather than trying to counter the techniques at the operational and tactical level, one should move towards asserting strategic penalties through sanctions, diplomatic condemnation, isolation and strategic positioning alongside allies and partners.[29] In other words, to assess and prepare for the conflicts of the 21st century, Western policymakers must, in the words of the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, "learn to use the language of power".[30]

29. R. Johnson, 'Hybrid War and Its Countermeasures: A Critique of the Literature', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Volume 29, Issue 1 (2018): 144.
30. J. Borrell, *Foreign Policy in Times of COVID-19*, European External Action Service, 2021, 14.

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