

'Propaganda of the Deed' as a War Termination Strategy

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Abstract

For decades the bulk of academic analyses and findings have maintained a linear interpretation of propaganda of the deed. Propaganda of the deed is linked to actions by non-state actors such as terrorists and militant groups. Indeed, the traditional interpretation has limited the expansion of the term and its application in different academic fields. In this paper, I show that propaganda of the deed should not be exclusive to explaining terrorist's violent action. Hence, I argue that the military and academics should employ the term to explain a nation's excessive use of violent action against a belligerent state in modern warfare. Therefore, arguing that non-state actors and states use the propaganda of the deed is not mutually exclusive. For this reason, I focus on the application of propaganda of the deed as a war termination strategy, again insisting that the concept can be successfully applied on the battlefield by a state to subdue its adversary to enter a war termination negotiation, thus bringing an end to the war. In its narrow sense, as a war termination strategy, the concept can assist in transforming our understanding of war termination from the battlefield.

Keywords: Propaganda, War, Battlefield, Strategy, War termination, Propaganda of the deed, War Strategy, Communication, Strategic, Terrorist, Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam War, Second World War, Military

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Introduction

In the military setting, war is examined as a separate activity, thus, rejecting the conception that war is an extension of politics. However, “On War” insists that politics is the only source of war.² Clausewitz argues that “we see, therefore, that war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.”³ Clausewitz’s statement infers that war is a normal facet of a state’s policy. Nevertheless, the state engages in war to protect its population. In contrast, Clausewitz defines war as an act of violence deployed by the opposing states to compel the defending state to fulfil a political or policy objective.⁴ Thies and Sobek argue that war is fought for political and economic reasons.⁵ To the authors, war is fought not only to settle a dispute between states but to acquire territories (land) and to pursue the economic interest of the states. Although wars are fought to settle disputes, the central function of war is to serve the population’s interest.⁶ Therefore, war should only be fought to meet the state interest. Clausewitz contends that war should be fought to achieve a rational objective; to him, the population’s interest is chief in waging war.⁷ Indeed, states engage in war to either win territories or to assert their political will on the defending states. Furthermore, states enter wars intending to achieve an outcome in the short term, understanding that prolonged wars are costly and may impact the outcome of war.⁸

Although the military is interested in understanding the most effective strategy to win wars, they are equally interested in the process

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1997), 12.

³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 12.

⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 13.

⁵ Cameron Thies and David Sobek, “War, Economic Development, and Political Development in the Contemporary International System,” *International Studies Quarterly* 54 (2010): p. 267-287, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40664246>

⁶ Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's Second Book; The Unpublished Sequel to Mein Kampf*. (Huddersfield: Enigma Books, 2006), 33.

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 57.

⁸ James Petras and Henry Valtmeyer, *Multinational on Trial: Foreign Investment Matter* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 65.

of war termination. The research argues that battle outcome determines the premise for war termination; therefore, decision of the state to end or continue a war should primarily be based on data gathered from the outcome of small battle engagements.⁹ While there is a valid argument in the conception that the outcome of battles should form the premise of war termination, there are challenges in deploying data as a key component for war termination. Some challenges include the validity of the data and the availability of data. Hence, the analysis produced will concentrate on the theoretical perspective of war termination. The exclusion of empirical data does not affect this analysis from using battlefield outcomes to explain why a state may choose to terminate a war.

Ramsay maintains that events on the battlefield are essential when explaining war termination. Ramsay sees battles as the central feature of war.¹⁰ Indeed, the battle is where a state attempts to use violent action to subdue the other to achieve its political goal. From this perspective, one can argue that a relationship exists between war termination and the outcome of the battles. Violence is the chief variable to force an opponent to accept war termination on the battlefield. Therefore, violence is necessary to win a war. However, the successful outcome of deploying violent action as a war termination strategy depends on understanding the opponent's strength. There are factors that determine the relationship between war termination and the battle outcome. These factors include the role of diplomacy, emotions, mind-set of the soldiers engaged in the battle, and media. These factors contribute to war termination outcomes. The role of the listed factors will be examined in detail. The article argues that propaganda of the deed is vital in war termination. Propaganda of the deed should not be exclusive to explaining terrorist's violent action employed to influence policy outcomes through exerting fear into the population but should be applied as a strategy that states can utilise to end

⁹ Kristopher W. Ramsay, "Setting it in the Field: Battlefield Events and War Termination," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no 6 (2008): pp 850-879, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708324593>

¹⁰ Kristopher W. Ramsay, "Settling It on the Field: Battlefield Events and War Termination," 850-879.

a war. In justifying this conception, the paper will examine the relationship between war termination and violent deeds.

Furthermore, the role of emotion in war termination will be discussed. The researcher seeks to develop a new definition to explain the propaganda of the deed. Also, the definition will be supported by Pavlov's classical condition. The article suggests that emotional events on the battlefield coupled with violent deeds can affect war termination. In addition, the Ukraine War will be employed as a scenario to simulate the use of propaganda of the deed as a war termination strategy. Indeed, the author will utilise the bargaining war model to justify his analysis. The research also intends to explain the cost of war and its impact on war termination.

Further, a link will be developed between the cost of war and the application of propaganda of the deed in war termination. It is hoped that the association between the cost of war and the propaganda of the deed will shed light on the significance of the concept as a war termination strategy.

Bargaining War Model

To Filson and Werner, the notion that war termination can be achieved simply from "*fighting to finish*" is erroneous.¹¹ Filson and Werner maintain that the "*Fight to finish*" model is commonly applied in academia due to its simplicity. War termination is a complex process that requires identifying various factors that can facilitate ending a war. Therefore, a simplified notion may not necessitate terminating a war. The bargaining War Model suggests that the negotiation process of war termination should not exclude a political process; thus, achieving war termination should comprise political and military manoeuvres.¹² An

¹¹ Darren Filson and Suzanne Werner, "A Bargaining Model of War and Peace: Anticipating the Onset, Duration, and Outcome of War," *American Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 4 (2002): p. 819, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088436>.

¹² Darren Filson and Suzanne Werner, "A Bargaining Model of War and Peace," 819.

agreement to settle a war occurs when both sides' military and political decision makers agree to settle their differences. However, military manoeuvres on the battlefield supported by political manoeuvres are necessary for war termination.

Each player always wants more resources and benefits, that the marginal utility of resources and benefits are diminishing, and that the marginal utility of benefits is increasing in resources and the marginal utility of resources is increasing in benefits. This last condition implies that a disputant's willingness to risk resources in battle increases his resources and decreases the size of his benefits. War consists of an alternating sequence of negotiations and battles. If negotiations succeed, the war ends.¹³

In contrast, various factors can determine a settlement leading to war termination. These factors may include the depletion of battlefield resources, the role of media, diplomacy, emotions, morale of the soldiers, role of policy and battle duration.¹⁴ Filson and Werner contend that diplomacy alone cannot affect war termination.¹⁵ The authors maintain that if diplomacy is effective in war termination, the disputants in the war may not have engaged in the conflict. Moreover, war termination without military and political manoeuvres can only be realised through a decisive victor. Furthermore, war termination is possible when military activities on the battlefield support political negotiation.¹⁶ While diplomatic negotiation may fail, activities on the battlefield may persuade the disputant to terminate the war. Issues such as losses on the battlefield and

¹³ Darren Filson and Suzanne Werner, "A Bargaining Model of War and Peace," p.822.

¹⁴ Karl R. DeRouen, *An Introduction to Civil Wars* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2015),21.

¹⁵ Darren Filson and Suzanne Werner, "A Bargaining Model of War and Peace," p.822.

¹⁶ K. R. Sorfleet, "Conflict Termination: Implications for Military Officers," *Defence Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001): pp. 49-74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/71400019>.

a prolonged war may increase the cost of war. Hence the role of propaganda of the deed as a war termination mechanism becomes significant. Propaganda of the deed as a battlefield and military manoeuvre can force an opponent to enter a war termination negotiation. Indeed, battlefield losses and effective media propaganda can influence a belligerent force to negotiate a termination.

The casualties of the war on the battlefield can influence the belligerents to settle their incompatibility. For example, using an atomic bomb as a battlefield manoeuvre can increase war casualties, thus influencing the opponent to seek a peaceful settlement. Under this condition, a peace process is achievable. On the 7th of September 1970, during Vietnam War negotiations,¹⁷ deeds on the battlefield, such as dropping 214 tons of bombs on Cambodia, were advantageous for the US to push for a war termination agreement.¹⁸ Advances during US operations in Cambodia played a role in the US negotiation strategy to end the war. Indeed, a peace process is possible when state actors recognise the impact of the costly war on their political survival.¹⁹ Under the Bargaining war Model, war termination is achievable when the cost of war outweighs achieving the policy and political outcome. Moreover, resource depletion can influence the belligerent force to pursue a different outcome. Incapability to terminate war will introduce the need to develop bargaining leverages. A bargaining leverage and acceptability by all parties will determine a successful war termination effort.²⁰ However, when depletion of resources or increased casualties cannot induce a war termination, a decisive military victory is needed. Arguably the application of the deed, proceeded by successful propaganda, can contribute to a state achieving a decisive military victory.

¹⁷ Cheng Guan Ang, *Ending the Vietnam War the Vietnamese Communists' Perspective* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 35.

¹⁸ Taylor Owen and Ben Kiernan, Bombs Over Cambodia, Yale University, October, 2006. https://gsp.yale.edu/sites/default/files/walrus_cambodiabombing_oct06.pdf.

¹⁹ Tansa Massoud, "War Termination," *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 4 (1996): 491-496, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343396033004009>

²⁰ Darren Filson and Suzanne Werner, "A Bargaining Model of War and Peace," 822.

Definition of the Propaganda of the Deed

Rothenberger defines propaganda of the deed stating that “it is a mean of creating political change through fear.”²¹ Alternatively, the term can be defined as using violent action to show an insurgent group’s military strength, capability, and purpose.²² The mention of propaganda of the deed triggers the term terrorism which is mainly associated with the application of propaganda of the deed. The concept is characterised by violence, murder, kidnappings, and other activity to exert fear in a population. The concept is also perceived as an integral part of urban guerrilla warfare.

Nevertheless, the research argues that the term propaganda of the deed should not be exclusive to violent terrorist actions aimed at exerting fear in a population. However, the term can equally be adopted to describe a state’s use of excessive violence to exert fear in the opposing state’s population to compel it to concede defeat. Propaganda of the Deed as a negotiation strategy can affect a war termination on and off the battlefield. Understanding this perception obliges an analysis of the definition of propaganda of the deed.

The research argues that the use of propaganda of the deed by state and terrorists is not mutually exclusive. Some literature on the subject may classify extremely violent actions of states as state terror. However, as the state intends to exert fear in a population to achieve the desired outcome, the action is synonymous with its application by a terrorist group and non-state actors. Levy and Adams state that “*Paul Brousse, one of the early advocates of anarchist communism in the anti-authoritarian International, came to conceive of propaganda of the deed as exemplary forms of direct action designed to provoke and to inspire*

²¹ Rothenberger Liane, *Terrorism as Communication Stocktake, Explanation and Challenges* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2023), 23.

²² Derina Holtzhausen and Ansgar Zerfass, *The Routledge Handbook of Strategic Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 482.

the masses to revolutionary action."²³ Johann Most, who vocally advocated propaganda of the deed in the US, is recognised for his stance on the term. Propaganda by the deed can be traced from the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and is known to have emerged in the 1870s.²⁴ It can be traced back to Bakunin, who is known to have declared the term propaganda by the deed. In contrast, in 1873, Errico Malatesta was responsible for coining and defining the term. Errico Malatesta and others, such as Carlo Cafiero, insisted that an insurrection through the act of the deed was the most effective means of propaganda.²⁵ Malatesta maintained that through the propaganda of the deed, one can penetrate the deepest layers of society. The successful application of the concept provided an opportunity to force humanity to rise against the oppressive nature of the government. Nevertheless, Malatesta and Cafiero did not directly espouse violence but argued that a revolution was a logical path for insurrection. However, Colson argues Berkman, who is also credited with the inception of the term propaganda by the deed, enacted violence to react against the government.

Propaganda of the deed was first employed as a guerrilla tactics by the Irish Catholics in 1916.²⁶ The British response to the application of propaganda provided the apparatus for impetus to Irish Republican Army (IRA) to increase its popularity and justify its activities against the British. However, recently, propaganda of the deed has been employed by terrorist groups such as Hamas, Al Shabab, Al Qaeda and many others.

²³ Carl Levy and Matthew Adams, *The Revival of Anarchism as Politics, Methodology, and Its Presence in Academia*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) 338.

²⁴ Dan Colson, "Propaganda and the Deed: Anarchism, Violence and the Representational Impulse," *American Studies*, no. 1 (2017): 163-186, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44982624>.

²⁵ Dan Colson, "Propaganda and the Deed: Anarchism, Violence and the Representational Impulse, 163-186.

²⁶ Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, and Eric Dickson, "The Propaganda of the Deed: Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Mobilization," *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 2 (2007): 364–381, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4620071>.

Al Qaeda's utilisation of the concept was observed during the bombing of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

The 11th of September 2001 saw 19 men hijacking planes, purposefully crashing the planes into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon²⁷ killing 3062 people. From the terrorist perspective, propaganda of the deed was a mechanism to facilitate communicating change through violent action. The Violent action is deliberately enacted to secure the population's attention by exerting fear. Again, violence is a message that state or non-state actors communicate to the population to pressure the government to act favourably, assisting the group in achieving their objectives.²⁸

Propaganda of the deed communicates that the deed initiated at a particular time can produce an impact far more significant than words uttered by thousands of political agitators.²⁹ However, the principle is forged with the understanding that the size of the deed is subjective, yet the deed's impact and time are necessary to dispense the required message to the targeted audience.³⁰ There is a relationship between the deed and propaganda; thus, in its application, the action of the deed should proceed through effective propaganda.³¹

Propaganda of the deed is the use of violent action to achieve the conditioning of the population through exerting fear; however, the deed is meaningless without propaganda. There are two aspects to the

²⁷ Arthur Garrison "Defining Terrorism: Philosophy of the Bomb, Propaganda by Deed and Change Through Fear and Violence", *Criminal Justice Studies* 17, No. 3 (2004): 259-279, DOI: [10.1080/1478601042000281105](https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601042000281105)

²⁸ Ethan Bueno de Mesquita and Eric Dickson, "The Propaganda of the Deed: Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Mobilization," 364–81.

²⁹ Carl Levy and Matthew Adams, *The Revival of Anarchism as Politics, Methodology, and Its Presence in Academia*, In the he Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism, ed. Carl Levy, Matthew S. Adam (London: Palgrave, 2016), 19.

³⁰ Liane Rothenberger, "A Terrorist Group's Strategic Communication—the Case of the Red Army Faction," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 11, no. 4 (2017): pp. 286-305, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2017.1339191>.

³¹ Carl Levy and Matthew Adams, *The Revival of Anarchism as Politics, Methodology, and Its Presence in Academia*. 19.

propaganda of the deed: the first is the deed which is preceded by the second aspect, which is the propaganda effect. The propaganda of the violent deed encompasses the message informing the population of the violent action, which may harm the population. The effectiveness of propagating the deed depends on the actor's ability to dispense a positive message explaining the purpose of the deed.³² The message enforces the deed in the minds of the targeted population. Propaganda of the deed is delivered to affect the targeted population psychologically. The action triggers a feeling of fear and thus paralysing the intended audience.³³

The research argues that the propaganda of the deed should be defined as using violent action to exert fear and condition a targeted population to act favourably. The term conditioning is significant in this definition; thus, it is understood that a repeated action (Violent action) acts as a neutral stimulus, and propaganda (conditioned stimulus) is to trigger fear (conditioned responses) in the targeted population. The definition suggests that the actor engaging in violent action employs violence as a neutral stimulus that may not elicit a response in the targeted population. However, by repeating the action and attracting media attention, with the propagation of the action, which is the conditional stimulus, the actor can trigger the feeling of fear; fear is an emotion that responds to the information delivered by the media. The conditioned effect of the deed allows the actors to induce a favourable response from the targeted population.³⁴

The definition of the term is consistent with Pavlov's Classical condition, which is instrumental in asserting the devised definition. In his dog experiment, Pavlov argued that there are things that a dog does not need to learn. For instance, a dog does not need to learn to salivate when

³² Dan Colson, "Propaganda and the Deed: Anarchism, Violence and the Representational Impulse." *American Studies*, no. 1 (2017): 163-186, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44982624>.

³³ Kristopher Ramsay, "Settling it on the Field; Battlefield Events and War Termination," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 6 (2008): 850-879.

³⁴ Christine Brain, *Advanced Subsidiary Psychology: Approaches and Methods* (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, 2000), 20.

it sees food. From a behaviourist perspective, when examining Pavlov's experiment, food is recognised as an unconditional stimulus, while salivation is noted as an unconditional response.³⁵ The experiment employed a metronome as a neutral stimulus; however, during the experiment, Pavlov understood that by itself, the metronome could not elicit a response from the dogs. Pavlov began his experimental procedure when the clicking metronome was introduced to the dogs before the food was presented.³⁶ However, after repeating the trial, he introduced the metronome to the dogs. The repeated trial contributed to the metronome eliciting a salivating response from the dogs without the food. In his experiment, Pavlov demonstrated that they produced a conditioned response because the dogs were conditioned. That is, the neutral stimulus has become a conditioned stimulus.³⁷ He discovered that, for the dog to create an association, the two-stimulus must be closely presented in time. Arguing that time plays a central role in achieving a condition effect. The experiment showed that learning would not occur in the dog if the time between the conditional stimulus (bell) and the unconditional stimulus (food) were great.

Still, the propagandistic effect of the deed triggers a response in the audience.³⁸ To achieve the desired effect after the deed, the applicant should immediately ensure that the media propagate the action after its occurrence; time intervals play an important role in achieving a conditioned effect in the targeted population. In practice, the propagation of the deed should occur at the location the deed occurred. Further, achieving a full effect also requires the message explaining the deed's

³⁵ Ivan Pavlov, *Conditioned Reflexes* (London: Dover Publication, 1926),69.

³⁶ Ivan Pavlov *Conditioned Reflexes*, 69.

³⁷ Douglas Mook, *Classic Experiments in Psychology* (Portsmouth: Greenwood, 2004), 42.

³⁸ Carl Levy and Matthew Adams, *The Revival of Anarchism as Politics, Methodology, and Its Presence in Academia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 22.

reason and intended purpose. Masuku et al. argue that Bolt et al.³⁹ provide a classic example of the propaganda of the deed. Masuku states:

The Irgun bombed the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on July 1946, killing 91 people and injuring another 46. The terror implemented by the Stern Gang and the Irgun played a central part in bringing the majority of Yishur (the Jewish community living in Palestine who were committed to reliance on Britain) around to their view that British friendship was irrelevant to the goal of securing Palestine as a Jewish State.⁴⁰

Propaganda of the deed is a form of strategic communication deployed to change a population's attitude. Effective utilisation of the approach could redirect the targeted audience's actions, feelings, and emotions. Thus, the preferred outcome of the propaganda of the deed can influence the audience by activating an emotional response to an action.

Propaganda of the Deed as a War Termination Strategy

In Clausewitz's analysis, one can infer that, to him, war termination is possible through a decisive victor. Thus, activities on the battlefield are indicators that determine the war's outcome. Clausewitz stresses that defeat on the battlefield permeates the effectiveness of battlefield strategies.⁴¹ Applying propaganda of the deed as a battlefield strategy produces an outcome that impacts the losing party and affects its population, the government and the soldiers involved in the battle.

³⁹ Masuku, Mfundo Masuku, Victor Mlambo and Bhekani Ngwenya, "The Critical Analyses of Propaganda of the Terrorism Deed," *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 25, (2021): 619-629,

<https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/article/view/4886>.

⁴⁰ Masuku, Mfundo Masuku, Victor Mlambo and Bhekani Ngwenya, "The Critical Analyses of Propaganda of the Terrorism Deed," 619-629.

⁴¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 156.

Therefore, achieving victory in a battle using the propaganda of the deed as a strategy will contribute to the collapse of the defending force.⁴² A defeat in battle can deliver the expected outcome and implies a weakness of the losing party, thus having an emotional and psychological effect on their ability to continue with the war. Milevski⁴³ argues that a defeat develops into a paralysing effect, expanding the fear of continuing the war. There are merits in this assumption; however, during the war (the Second World War) between Japan and the US, Japanese losses in the battle were insufficient to necessitate their need to terminate the war. The Doolittle Raid of 1942 (here referred to as propaganda of the deed) was a bombing raid on Tokyo and other cities in Japan; the raid killed “*at least 80,000 people, and likely more than 100,000, in a single night; some one million people were left homeless.*”⁴⁴

Although the bombing was a possible turning point of the war and boosted American morale to continue the war effort, the bombing had a lesser impact on coercing Japan to enter a settlement. The analysis demonstrates that in certain situations, propaganda of the deed as a battlefield strategy can influence the losing side to terminate the war depending on the type of conflict. However, the resilience of the belligerent will constitute the deployment of a different strategy to end the war. Ramsay contends that supremacy in number in battle is essential in determining the battle’s outcome.⁴⁵ Arguably, the battle’s power ratio can determine the war’s outcome. Supremacy in war includes factors such as the number of forces, intelligence capability, funding and resources and firepower capability. Indeed, when considering Clausewitz’s

⁴² Daniel Statman, “Ending War Short of Victory? A Contractarian View of *Jus Ex Bello*,” *Ethics* 125, no. 3 (2015): pp. 720-750, <https://doi.org/10.1086/679561>.

⁴³ Lukas Milevski, “Battle and Its Emotional Effect in War Termination,” *Comparative Strategy* 39, no. 6 (January 2020): pp. 535-548, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2020.1826844>.

⁴⁴ R.G. Grant, “Bombing of Tokyo,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Bombing-of-Tokyo>.

⁴⁵ Kristopher W. Ramsay, “Settling It on the Field,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 6 (2008): pp. 850-879, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708324593>.

analysis, he argues that a supreme force is expected to attain a higher advantage over its opponent.⁴⁶

For example, in the Pacific War of 1945, the atomic bomb was used as an instrument for war termination. The nuclear attack on Japanese cities was United States' battle strategy to force a settlement to end the war. Tomonaga maintains that on the morning of August 1945, the Japanese city of Hiroshima was destroyed by the first atomic bomb. The bomb, equivalent to 12.5 kilotons of TNT, reduced around 5 miles of the city to ashes⁴⁷ and caused an estimated 120,000 deaths.⁴⁸ After the bombing of the second city of Nagasaki, the US released a statement to justify the bombing. Two crucial factors associated with the propaganda of the deed are visible. First, dropping the atomic bomb is a violent act, and second, the message is sent to the media to justify their action. The strategy deployed by the US is a representation of the application of propaganda of the deed. Here, the impact of the deed, propagated by the world media, was significant in forcing the Japanese to surrender. There are two key factors emanating from the use of the atomic bomb. These factors are the emotional impact of the deed and the cost associated with the continuation of the war. Under this condition, the United States' use of nuclear weapons was a strategy to assert its will on Japan to achieve war termination. Propaganda of the deed initiated from the battlefield allows the superior and powerful force to resolve the pending dispute by asserting their will.

In the past, nations like the US have achieved war termination by imposing their superiority and military capability to achieve a decisive victory. The issue under examination transpired during the Persian Gulf

⁴⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1997), 121.

⁴⁷ Masao Tomonaga, "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: A Summary of the Human Consequences, 1945-2018, and Lessons for *Homo Sapiens* to End the Nuclear Weapon Age," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 2, no. 2 (March 2019): pp. 491-517, <https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2019.1681226>.

⁴⁸ Masao Tomonaga, "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: A Summary of the Human Consequences," 491-517.

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War, fought between 1990 and 1991.⁴⁹ When there are power differences between two opposing states, the state with the higher capacity is expected to overcome a weaker state in battle. The victory over the less capable state will end the war. Although it is expected that a superior capable force may overcome its opponent and thus ending the war, it is inconclusive to argue that superior capability will produce a decisive victor in war. For example, in the war against the Taliban, which was fought between 1999 to 2021, the United States' superior capability was superfluous in achieving a decisive victory.⁵⁰ War termination was gained through diplomacy and negotiations between the opposing forces. The example informs the understanding that numbers and superiority in capability are insufficient to achieve war termination as different conflicts warrant applying different strategies to obtain a settlement.

Propaganda of the Deed and Emotional Consequences in Battle

For decades, academics have observed a linear interpretation of propaganda of the deed, (as applied in explaining terrorist violent actions) thus eliminating any possibility of its application as a war termination strategy. However, this article submits to the conception that the non-linear approach of the term should be tolerated. The approach is vital on the battlefield as a war termination strategy to overcome a belligerent force.

The dropping of the atomic bomb emotionally affected the Japanese population and the soldiers on the battlefield. The devastating effect of the bomb reduced the soldiers' morale and impacted their ability to continue the war. As Milevski observed, the effect will discourage the defeated party from continuing the war.⁵¹ Emotional consequences

⁴⁹ "Persian Gulf War," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed on March 27, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War>.

⁵⁰ Sandy Gall, *War against the Taliban: Why It All Went Wrong in Afghanistan* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 65.

⁵¹ Lukas Milevski, "Battle and Its Emotional Effect in War Termination," *Comparative Strategy* 39, no. 6 (January 2020): pp. 535-548, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2020.1826844>.

remain useful in war termination. For instance, the emotional consequences of the atomic bombs' effect on the Japanese population, the state's actors and the soldiers can affect changes in cognitive behaviour. The behavioural change transpires through the reflective process of the devastating impact of the deed on the population. However, the impact of propaganda in communicating the message to the population influences the current and future emotional tendencies of all actors on the losing side.⁵² Hence, the emotional appraisal influences the soldier's interest in continuing the war. Milevsky sees that five emotional characteristics can influence a state's engagement in a settlement.⁵³ The emotional characteristics are humiliation, pride, hope, fear, and anger. The complex combination of fear and emotion resulting from the propaganda can lead to depression in the losing party. Depression can also manifest as shame and guilt in the losing party. Drawing on Milevsky's argument, one can argue that losses resulting from the propaganda of the deed can prompt the losing party to enter a negotiation. Considering the emotional devastation of the violent deed, the enemy in a particular situation will begin to cooperate and then concede to the will of the winning state. The analysis affirms Filson and Werner's understanding that the combined battlefield and diplomatic manoeuvring are crucial in achieving war termination.

Propaganda of the Deed and Cost of War Continuation

The impact of propaganda of the deed has a cost implication. For instance, in the current war between Russia and Ukraine, deploying a violent deed by either side can affect the cost implication of the war, and its impact can contribute to the war termination. Recently authors such as Pierre de Dreuzy and Andrea Gilli have focused on discussing the cost implication of Russia using an atomic bomb as a deed to force Ukraine to surrender, therefore, ending the war through a decisive victory.⁵⁴

⁵² Lukas Milevski, "Battle and Its Emotional Effect in War Termination," 535-548.

⁵³ Lukas Milevski, "Battle and Its Emotional Effect in War Termination," 535-548.

⁵⁴ De Dreuzy and Gilli Andrea, "Russia's Nuclear Coercion in Ukraine," NATO Review, last modified November 29, 2022, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2022/11/29/russias-nuclear-coercion-in-ukraine/index.html>.

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Alberque observes that “*on the 6th of October, US President Joe Biden stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent nuclear threats amounted to the most dangerous situation the world has seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, warning that any use of tactical nuclear weapons could lead to Armageddon.*”⁵⁵ Indeed, using a nuclear weapon to terminate the war in Ukraine will generate the same emotional effect as previously discussed. In addition, there will be human, political, and economic cost.

In a scenario where Russia deploys nuclear weapons, Ukraine cannot retaliate with a nuclear weapon. Ukraine’s key ally, the US, may not deploy nuclear weapons to defend Ukraine due to fear of a possible nuclear war between NATO, Russia, and its allies. The US may also consider the impact of a nuclear intervention on its domestic and international security interests. Therefore, Ukraine will be forced to enter a settlement. The devastating impact of the deed will result in internal and external cost implications. The external cost is associated with the decline in prestige on the international stage, loss of allies and the imposing of sanctions.

In contrast, the internal cost of a nuclear war termination will relate to casualties, and the leaders can also incur a domestic political cost.⁵⁶ In Ukraine, the opposition party can influence public opinion to terminate the war. Clausewitz argues that war is an extension of policy; therefore, ending war can result in a policy change.⁵⁷ In the case of Ukraine, one can argue that the devastating nature of a nuclear attack will lead to cost in casualties. This was the case between the US and Japan during the Pacific War. Similar events occurred that influenced the termination of the Vietnam War. Indeed, domestic politics can influence the direction of a war. When a government calculates the possibility of

⁵⁵ William Alberque, “Russia Is Unlikely to Use Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine.”

⁵⁶ Victor Ofose, *The Demise of Arms Control: Non-Compliance and the New World Order* (Washington DC: Academica Press, 2021), 37.

⁵⁷ Victor Ofose, *The Demise of Arms Control: Non-Compliance and the New World Order*, 37.

losing power, it might decide on war termination due to domestic pressure.

On the other hand, the Ukraine government may choose to continue the war, understanding that either a negative or a positive outcome will contribute to losing position. Massoud states, "*Most studies have shown that costs are linked to the calculations of actors in planning and ending a war. This view assumes that leaders are affected by costs because they value lives and material losses.*"⁵⁸ However, the cost of war, resulting from the propaganda of the deed, can compel a state to terminate a war. Still, a combination of propaganda of the deed and diplomatic pressure might contribute to war termination.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that propaganda of the deed is an effective strategy for war termination. Indeed, the claim signifies that it is vital for academics to adopt the non-linear approach of applying propaganda of the deed, therefore arguing that the term is not exclusive to explaining terrorist strategy. The evaluation observed an emotional implication to using the propaganda of the deed; however, the emotional effect of the approach is mandatory to force the belligerent opponent to enter into a settlement agreement. The main component of emotions examined was the impact of fear and anger on the targeted audience's cognitive process. The analysis demonstrates that the cost implication, related to the political, economic, and human cost of deploying propaganda of the deed, effectively influences war termination. During the analysis, a new definition was developed to explain the propaganda of the deed. The conditional effect of propaganda of the deed underpinned the definition.

Furthermore, applying Pavlov's classical condition achieved a definitive understanding of the definition. Indeed, during the analysis, it was evident that battlefield event was the focus of war termination. Thus,

⁵⁸ Tansa G. Massoud, "War Termination," *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 4 (1996): 491-496., <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343396033004009>.

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arguing that a battlefield event could necessitate a conflict's termination. The bargaining model of War demonstrates that combining military and diplomatic maneuverer was vital to achieving war termination. In conclusion, battlefield strategies determine the outcome of the actions of belligerent parties and implementing Propaganda of the Deed through fear and anger (predominantly fear) is a prerequisite for war termination.