

---

## LESSON 5

### CLASSICAL THEORISTS (III): JOMINI

*Why did and does Jomini have an appeal? There are six reasons, with some more important than others: He wanted to write, he sold himself, he targeted his audience, he wrote in French, he told a story,... and he had something to say.*

--Dr. Carol Reardon, Penn State University  
Address to the Command and Staff College  
15 August 1996

#### Introduction

---

##### **Purpose**

This lesson introduces you to the theorist Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini (1779-1869) and his basic theories and approaches to warfighting. His most famous book is *Precis de l'Art de la Guerre* (1838).

---

##### **Why Study Jomini**

- The influence of Jomini on the U.S. armed forces was immediate and direct. As late as the second decade of the 20th century, the influence was still apparent in the principles of war adopted by the armed forces of the United States.
  - These principles have been codified in nine doctrines. Over time, their wording and phraseology have varied, but the concepts have generally remained constant. Today, U.S. armed forces' doctrinal publications contain both the doctrine and appropriate commentary.
- 

*Continued on next page*

---

## Introduction, Continued

---

**Relationship to  
Other  
Instruction**

This lesson covers the last of the three classical theorists studied in *Theory and Nature of War* (8801). Jomini had a major influence in the 19th century.

You will encounter his theories again in studies pertaining to

- The American Civil War (lesson 6)
- Sea power and the naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan (lesson 8)

His views on wars of opinion, national wars, and civil and religious wars are also relevant to

- Revolutionary war theorists (lesson 12)
- *Operations Other Than War* (8809)

Many of his concepts have been indirectly incorporated into the principles of war that are an inherent part of U.S. military doctrine.

---

**Study Time**

This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 3.5 hours of study.

## Educational Objectives

---

**Theories and Approach** Describe Jomini's basic theories and his approach to warfighting.  
[JPME Area 3e]

---

**Jomini's Legacy** Understand the legacy of Jomini as a theorist in the profession of arms.  
[JPME Area 3e]

---

**Nature of Policy and War** Explain Jomini's view on the nature of policy and war. [JPME Area 3b]

---

**Jomini and Clausewitz** Compare and contrast the writings of Jomini and Clausewitz on the theory and nature of war, especially in regard to the political-military relationship.  
[JPME Area 3e]

---

**JPME Areas/  
Objectives/Hours  
(accounting data)** 3/b/2.0  
3/e/0.5

---

## Historical Background

---

### Background

In the decades after the defeat of Napoleon and the Bourbon restoration in France, a period of peace among the major powers prevailed in Europe.

- During these years, a time in which the powers controlled their ambitions and maintained a balance of power, military theorists conducted a major analysis of what had happened between 1789 and 1815.
  - Antoine-Henri Jomini, one of the best of these theorists, knew that what is now called a "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA) had its origins not in technology, but in the political, social, and economic changes that occurred initially in France and then spread throughout the continent.
- 

### Use of Theory

Theories and principles of war are useful aids in studying conflict. They provide structure to the chaotic nature of war. Jomini, interpreting Napoleonic warfare in his *Art of War*, developed a body of theory and principles to explain the nature of war. This early attempt at reducing war to a set of principles is useful as a point of departure for studying the nature of war.

---

### Jomini's Impact

Jomini drew widespread acclaim for his military wisdom when Clausewitz was a virtual unknown. Since that time, Jomini's writings have been discarded to some degree and proclaimed inaccurate. Nevertheless, he had an enormous impact on military thinking and deserves intellectual discussion. His writings brought Napoleonic warfare into the military thought of the American Civil War and certainly affected Prussian military thinking.

---

### Jomini and Clausewitz

Conceptually, Jomini and Clausewitz are rooted in a common base. Their differences revolve around points of theory and technique. Although the works of Jomini can never displace, on a purely intellectual level, those of Clausewitz, Jomini still has much to offer to a student of the theory of war.

---

*Continued on next page*

---

## Historical Background, Continued

---

**Jomini's Appeal** Realizing that men of his era knew that war was a fundamental element of life and statecraft, Jomini addresses a number of pressing problems of his times, some of which may apply to the present.

- The issue was how to control the major upheavals and costs of wars like the French Revolution and the Napoleon Wars while at the same time ensuring victory.
  - Jomini also provided a means of educating the officer corps of states that had either a very rudimentary professional military education or training system or none at all.
  - He offered solutions to an activity fraught with danger that both civilian and military leaders sought to control.
  - Additionally, he was a superb writer, addressing subjects that interested his audience.
-

## Required Readings

---

***European Armies  
and the Conduct  
of War***

Strachan, Hew. "Jomini and the Napoleonic Tradition." *European Armies and the Conduct of War*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1983, pp. 60 to 75.  
Strachan views Jomini through the sum of his works not just his *Art of War*. Jomini's greatest contribution was in the realm of strategy. He saw military planning according to mathematical and geographical formulas.

---

***Theory and  
Nature of War  
Readings***

Baron de Jomini. "The Art of War." *Theory and Nature of War Readings*, Annex B, pp. B-3 to B-28.

- Summary of the Art of War; Definition of the Art of War
- Chapter I, Statesmanship in its Relation to War
- Article VII, Wars of Opinion
- Article VIII, National Wars
- Article IX, Civil and Religious Wars
- Chapter III, Strategy
- Article XXI, Zones and Lines of Operations
- Conclusion

These selections from Jomini's *Art of War* provide a good sample of his views on, and approach to, the theory of war and the factors that must be considered in its formulation. They address the principles that remained a constant theme throughout Jomini's writings and provide an elaborate explanation of his view of strategy.

---

## For Further Study

---

### Supplemental Readings

The readings listed here are **not** required; they are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

- Shy, John. "Jomini." *Makers of Modern Strategy From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 143 to 185.
  - Johnson, William T., et. al. *The Principles of War in the 21st Century: Strategic Consideration*. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1995.
  - Joint Pub 1: *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (1995), pp. III-1 to III-9.
  - Joint Pub 3-0: *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (1995), Appendix A, pp. A-1 to A-3.
  - FM 100-5: *Operations* (1993) Appendix A, pp. 2-4 to 2-6.
  - Naval Doctrine Publication 1: *Naval Warfare* (1994), pp. 43 to 49.
  - Air Force Manual 1-1: *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force* (1992), Vol. I and Vol. II, pp. 9 to 15.
-

## Issues for Consideration

---

**Introduction** After 1815, Jomini and Clausewitz produced both histories and theoretical writings. They knew of each other's work. One issue among military intellectual historians is how they influenced each other. Nonetheless, both were and are still widely read.

---

**Jomini's Principles** In his attempt to interpret Napoleonic warfare, Jomini developed a body of theory and attempted to reduce war to a set of principles.

- What were the general principles of war that became a central theme of his writings?
  - Do Jomini's principles of war have a place in modern war?
- 

**Political Control** How does Jomini treat the issue of the subordination of the military to political control? Does his view differ from that of Clausewitz?

---

**Views on Strategy** Jomini attempted to isolate strategy from its political and social context. Why? What effect did this have on his interpretation of Napoleon's greatness and of the role of the French Revolution?

---

**Comparing Clausewitz and Jomini** There are some similarities between von Clausewitz and Jomini, but also great differences that marked each author's perception of war. How does Jomini's theory compare with von Clausewitz's?

---

**Jomini's Influence** Evidence of Jomini's influence during and after the 19th century is impressive. What has been the effect of Jomini's writings on the world's armies? On later theorists?

---