

# Primordial Violence, Chance and Probability, and Political Reason: Applying Clausewitz's Paradoxical Trinity to the 2025 Thai–Cambodian Border Conflict

Wasan Pounpunwong

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Local Development, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University, Phitsanulok 65000, Thailand*

(Corresponding author's e-mail: [wasan.po@psru.ac.th](mailto:wasan.po@psru.ac.th))

Received: 28 January 2026, Revised: 12 March 2026, Accepted: 19 March 2026, Published: 23 March 2026

## Abstract

This article analyzes the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border crisis through Carl von Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity to (1) reinterpret the clashes not as isolated skirmishes but as a limited war structured by emotion, chance, and policy, and (2) propose a spatialized framework for contemporary border disputes in Southeast Asia. The conflict is situated within a longer history of colonial boundary-making, the Preah Vihear dispute, and rival temple claims, while also engaging ASEAN's non-interference norm, U.S.–China rivalry in the Indo–Pacific, and enduring tensions in Thailand's civil–military relations. Clausewitz's three dimensions are systematically applied. Primordial violence appears in mutually reinforcing Thai and Cambodian nationalisms, grounded in memories of territorial loss and historical victimhood. Chance and probability emerge in landmine incidents, misperceptions, domestic political instability, and the contingent moves of external powers. Political reason is shown to be structurally fragile, particularly in Thailand's fragmented security governance and the absence of coherent political objectives. The article concludes by advancing a framework that embeds Clausewitz's triad within concrete borderland and regional institutional settings. This framework explains both the escalation and management difficulties of the 2025 crisis and offers scenarios for Thai–Cambodian relations and other Southeast Asian border disputes: unmanaged rivalries, controlled competitive dyads under ASEAN, or genuinely cooperative border regimes.

**Keywords:** Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity, Thai–Cambodian border conflict, Territorial nationalism, Civil–military relations, ASEAN

## Introduction

The Thai–Cambodian border conflict is one of the most persistent and intricate geopolitical challenges in Southeast Asia. The historical trajectory spans from the demarcation of the Siam–French border in the early twentieth century to the 1962 ruling of the International Court of Justice (Singh, 2019; Win, 2025), the 2008 designation of the Preah Vihear temple as a World Heritage site, the military conflicts from 2008 to 2011 (Grabowsky, 2017; Chechi, 2016), and the resurgence of hostilities in 2025. From this extended historical viewpoint, the boundary should not be perceived solely as a cartographic line delineating territorial sovereignty. It signifies a politically charged and historically complex environment where legal claims, collective memory, historical interpretation, and nationalist

discourse have been intricately interwoven throughout time. The overlapping regions next to significant temple sites, along with conflicting interpretations of maps and treaties, have rendered the frontier consistently susceptible to conflict escalation (Pawakapan, 2013; Wisaijorn, 2025). This debate has revealed the fundamental constraints of ASEAN's security framework at the regional level. The Preah Vihear crisis, the confrontations from 2008 to 2011, and the resurgence of violence in 2025 illustrate that ASEAN continues to be limited by its non-interference principle and has not yet established a robust role in conflict resolution (Ramcharan, 2000; Mueanmart, 2025). Simultaneously, the domestic political dynamics in both nations, particularly in Thailand, where governmental

legitimacy, leadership transitions, and civil-military relations are contentious, have consistently rendered the border a politically charged arena and a testing ground for nationalist mobilization (Saensongkram, 2025). In 2025, the battle escalated over various disputed locations, including Chong Bok, Chong Arn Ma, Ta Muen Thom, Ta Kwai, Phu Makhuea, and Huay Tamai, all of which continue to be zones of territorial and security strife. The events led to casualties, displacement, and instability related to the signing, suspension, and deterioration of the Kuala Lumpur Peace Declaration (Rattanabanthoeng, 2025; The MATTER, 2025), highlighting the vulnerability of regional mechanisms to manage violence amid political pressure and nationalist fervor (BBC News Thai, 2025).

The contention over communal memory and national identity transcends mere legal or territorial disputes. It is intricately linked to a Thai account of territory loss and a Cambodian account of colonial victimization. Cultural heritage sites like Preah Vihear and groups of border temples have been reinterpreted as potent symbols of sovereignty, while protests, embassy demonstrations, social media campaigns, and rhetoric of “not conceding even a single square inch of territory” have consistently heightened nationalist sentiment along the frontier (Ippoodom, 2025). The memory-based and discursive dimensions influence several tiers of political decision-making, ranging from border communities to intergovernmental discussions. Despite numerous studies characterizing the Thai–Cambodian dispute as a low-intensity conflict influenced by domestic politics, elite competition, and ASEAN’s institutional limitations, there is a necessity for a comprehensive analytical framework that systematically incorporates these multifaceted dynamics. This necessity is especially significant in the current geopolitical landscape, marked by evolving U.S.–China power dynamics, escalating Indo-Pacific rivalry, and the employment of border conflicts as negotiation platforms at both regional and great-power tiers. The occurrences of 2025, comprising armed conflicts, ceasefire declarations acknowledged by external entities, the formation of an ASEAN observer mission, and escalated tensions after a landmine incident, constitute a substantial empirical case for reevaluating theoretical frameworks concerning war, peace, and security in Southeast Asia (Deth, 2020). A thorough

comprehension of the Thai-Cambodian conflict necessitates transcending traditional security viewpoints and solely materialist, state-centric interpretations.

This article examines the 2025 Thai-Cambodian border crisis through Carl von Clausewitz’s “Trinity of War,” which conceptualizes war as the outcome of the interaction among three elements: public emotion and hostility, military uncertainty and strategic opportunity, and the rational calculations of political leaders (Clausewitz, 1984; Clausewitz, 2003; Aron, 2022). The 2025 conflict illustrates the convergence of these dimensions through the mobilization of territorial nationalism in mass and digital media, the reinforcement of troop deployments and emergency measures in border areas, and the strategic calculations of governments confronted with questions of sovereignty, domestic stability, relations with major powers, and international reputation (von Clausewitz et al., 1976). From this perspective, the crisis is understood not merely as a confrontation between armed forces, but as a multilayered political conflict shaped by the interaction among society, the military, and the state under the simultaneous pressures of nationalism, media, and regional and international politics (Clausewitz, 1984).

Methodologically, the article draws upon books, research reports, scholarly articles, and other academic publications relevant to Clausewitz’s Paradoxical Trinity, while its analysis of the Thai–Cambodian dispute is further informed by commentaries and reporting from both domestic and international media sources. These materials are examined critically in relation to the theoretical framework throughout the study. The article has two interrelated objectives. First, it applies the Trinity of War framework to explain the dynamics of the 2025 Thai-Cambodian border conflict by analyzing how popular emotion, military uncertainty, and state rationality interacted to shape escalation. Second, it proposes a broader analytical approach for examining the Thai–Cambodian dispute and other border conflicts in Southeast Asia by integrating Clausewitzian insights with the region’s specific spatial and political context. In this sense, the 2025 conflict is interpreted as a convergence of colonial legacies, unsettled boundary demarcation, historical memory, perceptions of the Other, territorial nationalism, fragile civilian oversight of the military, ASEAN’s cautious

engagement, and the strategic interests of major powers in the Indo-Pacific.

The article is organized into four main sections. The first outlines the theoretical framework, with particular attention to Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity and its relevance to contemporary conflict analysis. The second reviews the historical and political background of the Thai-Cambodian border dispute. The third analyzes the 2025 conflict through the lens of the paradoxical trinity. The final section discusses the broader implications of the study for political science, international relations, and regional conflict management.

### **Theoretical perspective**

#### ***Clausewitz's original conception of the paradoxical trinity***

To elucidate the significance of the paradoxical trinity in Clausewitz's work, it is essential to start with *On War* itself, rather than with subsequent textbooks or strategic manuals (Clausewitz, 1984). Villacres and Bassford (1995) note that a significant issue in the analysis of Prussian military theory in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the inclination to interpret Clausewitz via "secondary images" and doctrinal summaries rather than directly engaging with the original text. Upon reevaluating the primary source, it is evident that Clausewitz did not merely characterize the trinity as three entities, the state, the army, and the people, as is frequently presumed. He framed it as three interconnected dimensions of the nature of war: primordial violence, hatred, and enmity; the interplay of chance and probability; and alignment with rational policy (Hughes, 2021).

These three elements should be regarded as interconnected dimensions of a singular phenomenon rather than as separate components. The initial dimension addresses the influence of emotions, hostility, and destructive tendencies in the initiation and perpetuation of conflict, impacting both combatants and the broader community. The second dimension highlights the structural uncertainty inherent in warfare, encompassing errors, unexpected occurrences, miscalculations, and seemingly trivial decisions that can lead to significant strategic outcomes. This is the domain of friction and the "fog of war," which cannot be eradicated even through meticulous planning. The

third dimension emphasizes that, according to Clausewitz, war is not merely an act of violence but rather a political tool that must be aligned with policy objectives and the rational considerations of the state (Villacres & Bassford, 1995; Waldman, 2016; Buckley, 1995). The difference between Clausewitz's original definition and the subsequent simplification of the trinity to the formula of "state, army, and people" extends beyond mere terminology. This has significant theoretical implications. Clausewitz aimed to elucidate war as a phenomenon characterized by three dimensions that are concurrently in tension and interaction. Subsequent interpretations, however, redefined the concept as a streamlined institutional framework linked to the contemporary nation-state. The transition from three dimensions of a phenomenon to three institutional actors has significantly contributed to misinterpretations in later literature (Villacres & Bassford, 1995).

Comprehending the trinity necessitates contextualizing it within Clausewitz's military experience. His experiences during the Napoleonic Wars at Jena, Moscow, and Waterloo allowed him to witness the evolution of warfare from battles between organized armies to manifestations of "people's war" influenced by nationalist mobilization, revolution, and the establishment of the modern state (Handel, 2001). The trinity was not merely developed as an abstract philosophical model; it aimed to elucidate how, within the evolving modern state system, war was influenced by public sentiment, operational ambiguity, and policy rationale (Handel, 2001; Villacres & Bassford, 1995).

#### ***Major debates and misinterpretations in the literature***

The trinity has emerged as a widely referenced concept in strategic studies; however, it is also one of the most commonly misinterpreted. Villacres and Bassford (1995) contend that this misunderstanding frequently arises from selective reading, where Clausewitz is utilized to endorse differing doctrinal positions, whether by critics of war or by advocates who view war primarily as a tool of the state. A prevalent misunderstanding reinterprets the trinity from three dimensions of the nature of war into three structural entities: government, military, and populace. This rendering, while convenient and useful for strategic manuals, simplifies the complexity of emotion, chance,

and reason to a narrower inquiry regarding which actor is most significant, rather than exploring the interactions among these three dimensions within warfare (Clausewitz, 1984).

A significant discussion revolves around the applicability of Clausewitz in conflicts that do not focus on nation-states and conventional military forces. Advocates of the “new wars” thesis highlight the evolving nature of conflict following the Cold War, which encompasses civil wars, insurgencies, and the increasing influence of non-state armed groups. From this perspective, Clausewitz’s framework is occasionally viewed as antiquated and requiring substitution with paradigms focused on crime, fragmented authority, and depoliticized violence (Kaldor, 2013; Newman, 2004). Schuurman (2010) advises exercising caution before arriving at this conclusion hastily. While the nature of warfare has evolved, he contends that the fundamental issues of political purpose, public support, and the determination to engage in conflict remain pivotal, thus ensuring the analytical relevance of the trinity.

Additional complexities emerge from cultural and contextual critiques. Porter (2007) cautions that an uncritical dependence on Clausewitz may obscure the viewpoints and cultural underpinnings of one’s opponents. In the situation regarding Iraq, the United States believed that the disbandment of conventional military forces would successfully conclude the conflict, while failing to fully recognize the significance of identity, religion, honor, and resistance. Porter (2007) does not advocate for the complete dismissal of Clausewitz; instead, he suggests that a more serious integration of trinitarian analysis with anthropological and cultural perspectives is necessary to fully understand the contextual dimensions of contemporary conflict.

Misinterpretations of Clausewitz are also apparent in discussions surrounding “effects-based operations” (EBO) at the level of operational doctrine. Mattis (2008) critiques EBO for being exaggerated into an engineering-oriented perspective that is disconnected from the political and practical realities of warfare. In response, he advocates for a revival of classical principles that reestablish the connection between political, strategic, and tactical objectives—an alignment that is fundamental to Clausewitz’s strategic

thought (Mattis, 2008). Collectively, these discussions indicate that the primary concern extends beyond the relevance of the trinity; it encompasses the ways in which it is interpreted, adapted, and applied in modern contexts, as well as the recognition of its limitations throughout this process (Villacres & Bassford, 1995; Kaldor, 2013; Schuurman, 2010; Porter, 2007).

### ***Clausewitz and modern warfare***

The relevance of Clausewitz is particularly important in the context of modern warfare, as analysts face challenges such as new wars, hybrid warfare, cyber conflict, and artificial intelligence. A key consideration is whether the trinity continues to serve as an analytically valuable framework in these contexts or if it has merely transformed into a historical relic. Kaldor (2013) posits that, within the framework of “new wars,” post-Cold War conflicts are distinct from traditional Westphalian interstate wars regarding the actors involved, the economic structures at play, and the underlying logics of violence. She consequently encourages scholars to expand their perspectives on the concept of war. Kaldor (2013) notes that post-Clausewitzian approaches do not inherently necessitate a total dismissal of the classical framework; instead, various aspects of modern conflict demand its enhancement and modification.

Hoffman (2017) examines the impact of technological change by applying the trinity to the analysis of autonomous weapons systems and artificial intelligence. He contends that although technology changes the methods of warfare, it does not modify the essential characteristics of war itself. Violence continues to be a significant political phenomenon, even in the context of technological mediation. Chance and uncertainty continue to exist, albeit in new manifestations such as algorithmic escalation and emergent AI behavior. The matter of political control assumes greater importance in this context, as the absence of a coherent policy framework for autonomous systems could lead to warfare that eludes the rational political oversight highlighted by Clausewitz. Horowitz (2020) and Johnson (2022) contend that the strategic importance of drones, AI, and cyber capabilities extends beyond their technical attributes; their impact is influenced by the manner in which states and other entities integrate them into wider political aims,

particularly regarding escalation dynamics in nuclear crises.

Cyber conflict introduces further complexities. Taddeo (2018) highlights the structural limitations of classical deterrence theory within the context of cyberspace, particularly due to challenges in attribution and the unique cost–benefit dynamics associated with cyber operations. The conditions in question have a direct impact on the trinitarian aspect of subordination to rational policy. This necessitates a reevaluation in the context of the unique characteristics of cyberspace, all while maintaining the Clausewitzian focus on the alignment of means with political objectives. Simultaneously, discussions surrounding hybrid warfare and the analysis of Russian military adaptation serve as a reminder to avoid hastily discarding Clausewitz’s principles. Renz (2016) contends that the adoption of new labels and theories should be approached with caution, emphasizing the importance of thoroughly assessing the explanatory value that the classical framework continues to provide.

In summary, while the methods of warfare are continually changing, the three fundamental components of the trinity, violence as a political phenomenon, ongoing uncertainty, and the connection between military action and policy rationality, continue to be pivotal in current strategic discussions. Consequently, the trinity remains a valuable conceptual framework for analyzing the evolving nature of warfare while maintaining focus on its persistent political underpinnings.

### ***Transitioning from theory to an analytical framework***

Instead of viewing the trinity as merely a traditional slogan or a fixed doctrinal formula, contemporary scholarship proposes that it can be redefined as an empirical analytical framework. This literature review advances the discussion beyond the basic inquiry of the trinity’s current relevance and shifts toward a methodological consideration: how can the trinity be effectively operationalized in empirical research without diminishing it to a mere military cliché?

The study conducted by Edwards (2010) regarding the British Army in Northern Ireland presents a significant case for consideration. While the army

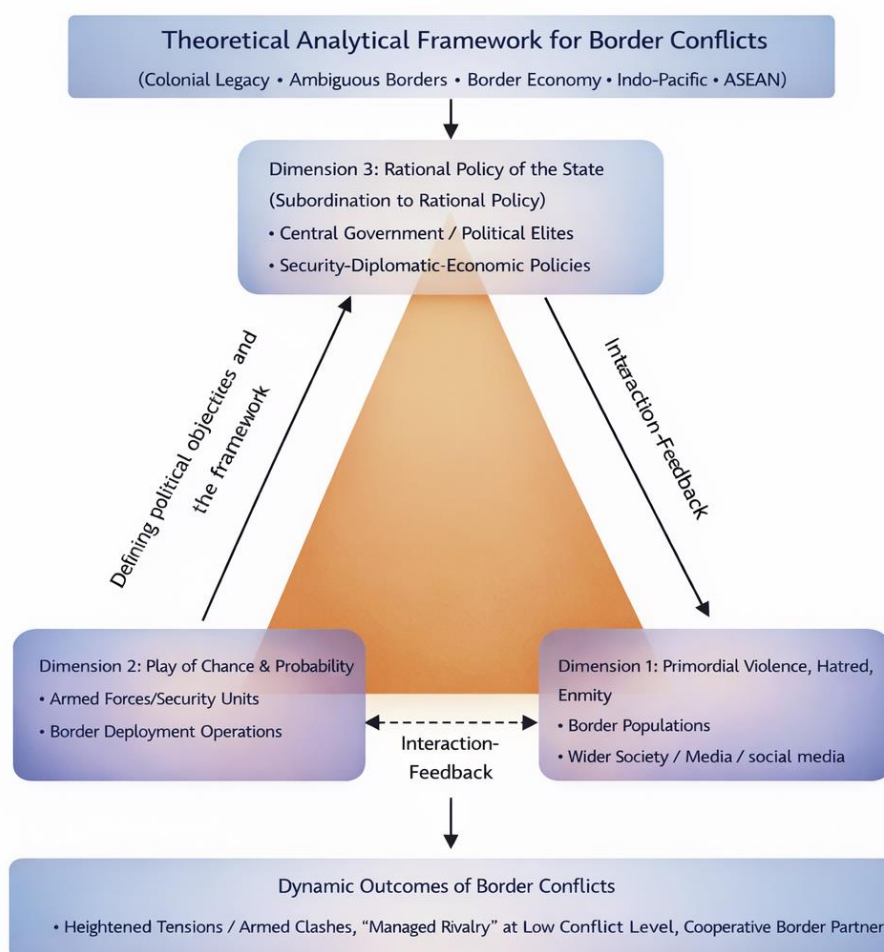
demonstrated tactical superiority and exerted pressure on the IRA, the disproportionate use of force, severe interrogation techniques, and detention without due process compromised the state’s legitimacy and contributed to the mobilization of the republican faction. In Clausewitzian terms, the political dimension—particularly legitimacy and public support—was undermined by the manner in which violence was utilized, despite visible operational success on the battlefield. As the state progressively transitioned to a law enforcement and policing framework informed by intelligence and an awareness of political dynamics, there was a notable decrease in violence. This case demonstrates how the trinity can systematically expose tensions and imbalances among the three dimensions of war. Schuurman (2010) presents a comparable argument concerning counterinsurgency. He proposes that comprehending success and failure in these conflicts necessitates a concurrent focus on political will, emotional management, public mobilization, and the navigation of operational opportunities and uncertainties. Instead of presenting a dichotomy between “new wars” and Clausewitz, he suggests that the trinity should function as a fundamental analytical framework that accommodates emerging variables such as shadow economies, criminal networks, and information technology.

At the operational and methodological level, the trinity can be reformulated as a three-dimensional framework for fieldwork and research design. The initial dimension pertains to emotional mobilization and the formulation of the adversary. The second pertains to structural uncertainty and the associated risks of escalation. The third pertains to the framework of institutions and the processes involved in policy decision-making. When viewed in this manner, the trinity transitions from a traditional doctrinal principle to a flexible analytical framework that can incorporate context, technology, and modern expressions of violence, all while maintaining theoretical rigor. This study utilizes Clausewitz’s paradoxical trinity not as a strict historical framework, but as a versatile analytical lens to explore the interplay of emotion, uncertainty, and policy within the dynamics of contemporary conflict.

### Geopolitics, conflict dynamics, and the military's involvement in the Thai–Cambodian border crisis

According to Clausewitz, war transcends a simple confrontation of military forces; it is influenced by a complex “paradoxical trinity” comprising (1) inherent violence, animosity, and hostility; (2) elements of chance and probability amidst strategic uncertainty; and (3) alignment with rational state policy within a structured political context (Clausewitz, 1984). This conception serves as a pivotal starting point for the current article, which aims to utilize the trinitarian framework to analyze the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border conflict through three interconnected dimensions: emotion, strategic chance and uncertainty, and the

rationality of state policy. Prior to engaging in a detailed analysis of the manifestations and operations of primordial violence, strategic chance and probability, and policy rationality in the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border conflict, this article examines the geopolitical context and historical background of the border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia. This examination particularly emphasizes the colonial legacy that influenced the boundary and disputed regions, alongside the military's involvement in the 2025 border crisis and the historical narratives and perceptions of the “Other” that have cultivated nationalist sentiments and mutual distrust. The analytical framework employed in this section is summarized in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Theoretical analytical framework for analyzing geopolitics, conflict dynamics, and the military's involvement in the Thai–Cambodian border crisis.

Source: Author

### ***An analysis of geopolitics and the historical context of the Thai–Cambodian border dispute***

From a geopolitical perspective, this article contends that the Thai–Cambodian border conflict is not simply a series of intermittent confrontations but rather a “pending legacy” of the colonial order that remains unresolved. The Siam–French treaties of 1904 and 1907, along with the Annex I Map created by the French, were primarily the result of diplomatic negotiations rather than a strict reflection of the actual topography. Consequently, the boundary line depicted on paper deviated from the natural watershed at various points, leading to the emergence of several “disputed areas” in subsequent years (Kraus, 2017; Wagener, 2011; Win, 2025).

The International Court of Justice determined that the Preah Vihear Temple is situated within Cambodian territory, referencing both the Annex I Map and Thailand’s prolonged inaction in filing a formal protest (Wagener, 2011). From the perspective of Thai society, this may be regarded as an injustice concerning international law. From the Court’s perspective, it was the cumulative outcome of implicit acceptance sustained over an extended duration. The 1962 judgment addressed the dispute regarding the “temple proper,” yet it did not clarify the legal status of roughly 4.6 square kilometers of the “surrounding area,” leaving its position ambiguous (Touch, 2022; Wagener, 2011). The legal and cartographic ambiguity has allowed both states to interpret the same judgment in manners that align with their individual interests.

In 2008, UNESCO’s designation of the Preah Vihear Temple as a World Heritage site in Cambodia served as a catalyst, transforming legal ambiguity into a notable political and security crisis—affecting both bilateral relations and domestic politics in Thailand (Wagener, 2011; Chachavalpongpun, 2013). This article contends that the “geopolitics of the dispute” in this case is closely connected to a “geopolitics of law” created by colonial powers and the structure of international adjudication, rather than being merely a technical issue of boundary delineation. In addition to the Preah Vihear Temple, the impact of colonialism is apparent in the lasting effects of Franco-Siamese treaties and cartographic methodologies, which have resulted in persistent inconsistencies between legal boundary

assertions and the actual territorial perceptions observed in the region.

A detailed analysis of legal issues indicates that the conflict is grounded in “historical memory” and “representations of the Other” that both societies have persistently generated (Chachavalpongpun, 2013). On the Cambodian side, national narratives connecting the legacy of ancient Khmer civilization, such as the Preah Vihear Temple and other border temple complexes, to a history of victimhood at the hands of neighboring powers and modern imperialism position territorial disputes as a “recovery of dignity” rather than simply administrative disagreements (Thai PBS, 2025).

In contrast, Thai nationalism has been influenced by the narrative of “lost territories,” which has emerged as the foundation of territorial nationalism. In this historical context, relations with Cambodia, particularly concerning the Preah Vihear case, are perceived through the lens of a once-prominent polity that has experienced territorial reduction. Boundary demarcation is described as a “national wound” that continues to require healing (Luekajornchai, 2025). The book *Preah Vihear: A Guide to the Thai–Cambodian Conflict and Its Solutions* highlight the significance of this issue, indicating that the Preah Vihear crisis has evolved into a “negative benchmark” in Thai politics: whenever a government faces accusations of being “too soft” or “conceding territory,” it is promptly met with considerable public scrutiny. This allows minimal opportunity for adaptable, discreet negotiation. According to Kasetsiri et al. (2013), the prevailing climate influences perceptions of all border-related actions—be it the signing of Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) minutes, the establishment of joint management areas, or high-level meetings. These actions are viewed through a dichotomous framework of “selling out the nation versus defending the nation,” rather than through a lens of rational strategic assessment (Kasetsiri et al., 2013).

At the regional level, the Thai–Cambodian border conflict constitutes an important test of ASEAN’s capacity to develop from an association primarily grounded in non-interference into a regional organization capable of addressing disputes among its member states more effectively. The crisis of 2008–2011 clearly revealed these limitations, as Thailand rejected ASEAN’s mediating role, reflecting both a lack

of confidence in regional intervention and the institutional constraints that hinder ASEAN's effectiveness in conflict management. In this sense, ASEAN continues to face a fundamental dilemma: how to strengthen its role as a meaningful political actor in Southeast Asia while remaining bound by its longstanding principles of non-interference and respect for state sovereignty (Haacke, 2023).

These institutional constraints are further compounded by the deeper historical and structural dimensions of the Thai–Cambodian dispute. Geopolitics, boundary demarcation, and the legacy of colonial rule have closely intertwined the conflict with questions of international law, historical memory, and regional institutional arrangements. As a result, the dispute cannot be understood merely as a bilateral border issue, but rather as a conflict embedded in overlapping legal, political, and historical frameworks that make it particularly susceptible to persistence and prolongation.

#### ***Conflict dynamics in 2025 Thai–Cambodian border situation***

An in-depth analysis of the 2025 crisis reveals that the recent border clashes did not arise in isolation; rather, they are indicative of previous crises developing within an altered political landscape in Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and the broader region. At the beginning of the year, seemingly minor incidents, such as a group of Cambodians singing their national anthem at Ta Muen Thom Temple in a region claimed by Thailand served, as evaluations of sovereignty and public sentiment in both nations. The incidents, intensified by media and social networks, culminated in an exchange of live fire at Chong Bok in Ubon Ratchathani Province. This confrontation led to the death of a Cambodian soldier and sparked mutual accusations regarding “who fired first,” resulting in a significant deterioration of bilateral relations. (The Nation, 2025). This aligns with Wagener's (2011) observation that the Thai–Cambodian border conflict is characterized as a low-intensity conflict primarily motivated by domestic political incentives rather than strictly military strategic objectives.

The crisis culminated in July 2025, as hostilities expanded across various fronts from Si Sa Ket and Surin to Ubon Ratchathani. Artillery and multiple-rocket

systems were deployed against military bases, civilian targets, and infrastructure, resulting in casualties among soldiers and civilians alike and displacing nearly 200,000 individuals. In response to these circumstances, the Thai government took the step of downgrading diplomatic relations by recalling its ambassador, to which Cambodia reciprocated accordingly. The border crisis was closely associated with the instability of the Thai government (Al Jazeera, 2025a). The audio clip featuring a conversation between the Thai leader and a former Cambodian leader, commonly referred to as the “Niece–Uncle” clip, has been disseminated on social media. It has been analyzed as potentially circumventing state mechanisms and raising concerns about compromising national interests in non-transparent manners. The consequences involved the exit of coalition parties, the Constitutional Court's directive to suspend Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra from his responsibilities, and the establishment of a government that lacked legitimacy from its inception. (Figure 2)

Simultaneously, at both regional and global structural levels, the 2025 crisis emerged against a backdrop of escalating geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific. The United States played a significant role, exerting pressure on leaders from both sides via phone calls, threats to suspend trade agreements, and proposals for humanitarian and security assistance (CNN, 2025). China has taken a measured approach while continuing to exert influence through investment and military support in Cambodia, where it holds the position of the largest creditor. This configuration transformed the Thai–Cambodian border into a significant point of great-power influence: Thailand needed to navigate its reliance on the United States for security alongside its economic ties to China, while Cambodia could leverage the border tensions as a strategic advantage in negotiations with both nations.

During Malaysia's chairmanship that year, ASEAN aimed to enhance its position from “observer” to “conflict manager” by facilitating peace talks in Kuala Lumpur and establishing the ASEAN Observer Team (AOT). Despite encountering limitations in resources and the necessity of military consent to access conflict areas, the mechanism demonstrates the region's effort to explore more refined forms of intervention. This approach aims to uphold sovereignty while

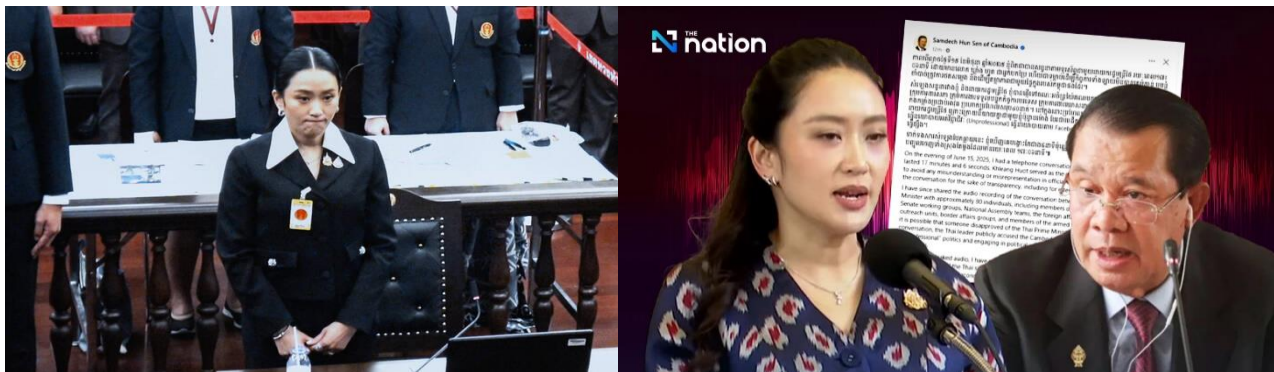
improving the ability to monitor and hold accountable those who violate agreements (Bangkok Tribune, 2025).

The mass media and social media emerged as significant elements that set the 2025 crisis apart from earlier occurrences. This article notes that a considerable portion of the Thai media persists in functioning within a traditional national- security framework, utilizing emotionally charged language and imagery like “lost territory” and “selling out the nation,” while heavily depending on information from Thai security agencies. In the meantime, social media facilitated the creation and dissemination of nationalist discourse, audio recordings, battlefield images, and decontextualized sound bites that compelled the public to “take sides” within simplistic binaries such as “us-Khmer” or “patriotic–unpatriotic.”

In comparison to other security challenges, such as toxic pollution in the Mekong headwaters at the Mae

Kok–Mae Sai confluence or the downstream effects of Chinese and Lao dams, it is clear that Thai nationalism responds more vigorously to concrete territorial matters than to environmental security issues, despite the significant impact the latter has on people’s lives and the nation’s sovereignty over resources. This highlights a structural limitation of territorial nationalism, which effectively mobilizes society against a “visible enemy” but faces challenges in addressing complex, actor-diffuse threats (Chachavalpongpon, 2025).

In conclusion, 2025 Thai–Cambodian border crisis is a convergence of the colonial legacy, unclear boundaries, international legal frameworks, historical memory, and territorial nationalism, along with the institutional limitations of ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific geopolitical landscape influenced by great- power rivalry, all intensified by the impact of mass media and social media.



**Figure 2** The matter concerning the conversation clip that resulted in the Constitutional Court’s ruling to dismiss Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra from his position.

**Source:** The Nation (2025), Arab News (2025)

### ***The role of the armed forces in the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border situation***

The 2025 Thai–Cambodian border crisis illustrates that the military’s function transcends the boundaries of a traditional security organization. The confrontations that initiated near Ta Muen Thom Temple and extended throughout the border, coupled with the assault on a petrol station at Ban Phue in Kantharalak District, Si Sa Ket Province, resulting in casualties among civilians, clearly illustrate that the application of military force has impacted not only defensive positions but also the lives of civilians and the trajectory of state policy. From this article’s perspective, this situation is not merely a

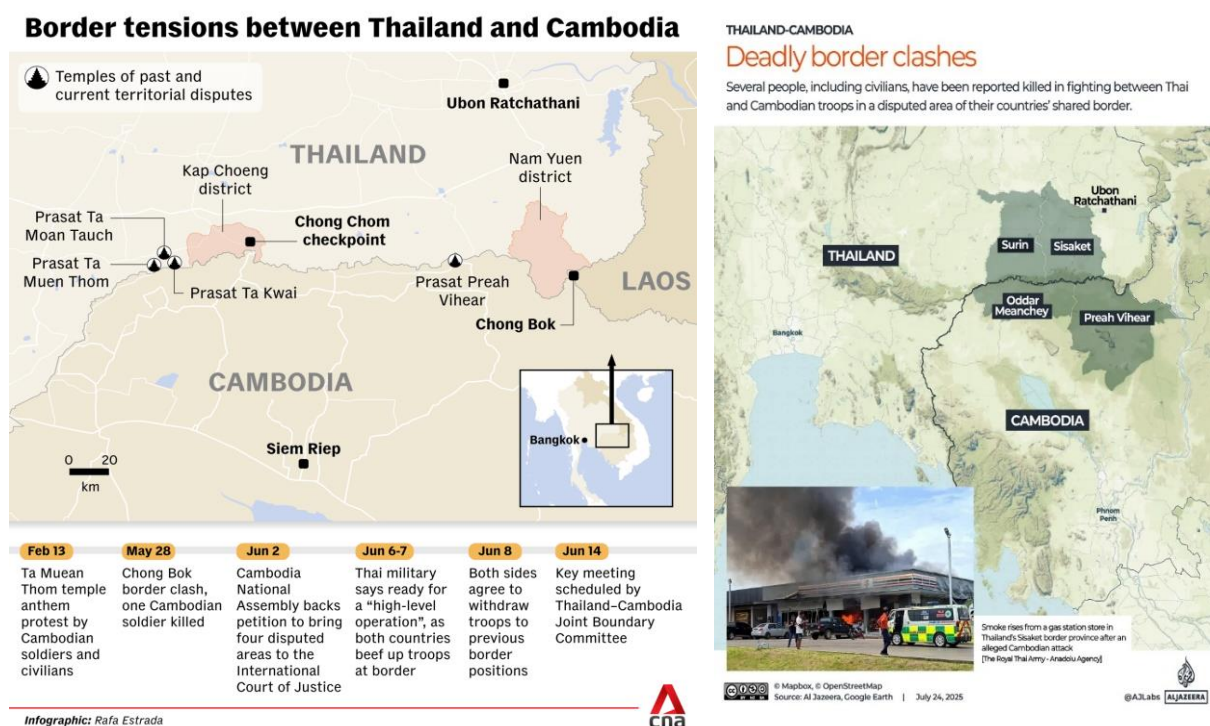
“border crisis” but also a “crisis of the military’s role” within Thailand’s political framework. (Figure 3)

An important turning point occurred on 10 November 2025, when a Thai soldier triggered a landmine. The Royal Thai Army stated that the mine was “newly laid on Thai territory,” whereas Cambodia refuted this claim, asserting it was a remnant from previous conflicts along the border (Michaels & Laksmana, 2025). This incident is intricately connected to discussions in international law, encompassing purported breaches of the Ottawa Convention, Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, and the right to self-defense as outlined in Article 51, analyzed through the frameworks

of “necessity” and “proportionality.” In practice, it was the military that dictated the pace of the crisis, through troop buildups, the utilization of air power, border closures, the declaration of martial law, and direct communication with the public, while the civilian government assumed a diminishing role (Al Jazeera, 2025b).

The most prominent issue that surfaced was the erosion of the principle of civilian oversight of the military. The Pheu Thai government demonstrated a deficiency in establishing a coherent national security policy and exhibited insufficient dedication to military

reform initiatives. The position of Minister of Defence was regarded more as a tool for negotiation in coalition politics rather than as a fundamental element of security strategy. In the context of cabinet reshuffles marked by significant tension, the defense portfolio remained unoccupied, resulting in operational authority being effectively held by former generals affiliated with coalition partners. This intensified a situation characterized by a “state within a state,” where the military operated according to its own strategic objectives with limited civilian oversight (Saensongkram, 2025).



**Figure 3** clashes on the Thai-Cambodian border in 2025  
**Source:** Al Jazeera (2025a), Channel News Asia (2025)

The integration of various dimensions of national power was notably insufficient. The deployment of economic and diplomatic tools, such as leveraging ASEAN frameworks, applying pressure through economic cooperation, or utilizing advantages in trade and cross-border labor, occurred late and in a fragmented manner. The military measures were escalated swiftly and assertively. The complete closure of all 798 kilometers of border crossings at a time when both armies were prepared for confrontation became a situation of “using the wrong instruments at the wrong

time,” potentially leading to a scenario where Thailand could “win battles on the field but lose the strategic war” (Paul Chambers, 2025). Within the realm of public discourse, military and hard-line nationalist factions effectively commanded the media landscape, utilizing slogans like “we will not cede even a single square inch of territory” and referencing the national anthem, “This land of Thais loves peace, but if war comes, we do not fear”, to justify the application of force. Scholarly warnings from experts in international relations and law were sidelined, resulting in limited opportunities for

peaceful solutions and restraint within the public discourse. On the Cambodian side, the military and elite leveraged the border crisis for political gain, submitting petitions to the International Court of Justice, refuting claims regarding newly placed landmines, and rallying nationalist sentiments against Thailand, while border communities prioritized economic repercussions over symbolic disputes (Silobreaker, 2025). Collectively, this image illustrates that the armed forces of both nations are significantly intertwined with domestic political affairs, rather than functioning solely as “security operators,” as is frequently asserted.

### **Analyzing Clausewitz’s trinity in the context of the 2025 Thai-Cambodian border conflict**

A comprehensive understanding of the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border crisis necessitates transcending a fragmented interpretation of the events as simply a “border skirmish” or “territorial dispute.” It is possible to understand as a phenomenon akin to warfare in the Clausewitzian framework, shaped by the interplay among the three elements of the “paradoxical trinity”: (1) fundamental violence, animosity, and hostility; (2) the dynamics of chance and uncertainty within the complexities of conflict; and (3) alignment with state policy and political rationale (Clausewitz, 1984; Villacres & Bassford, 1995). Utilizing this framework in the Thai–Cambodian case reveals that the 2025 conflict was not merely the result of tactical orders or isolated incidents. Instead, it emerged from the interplay and clash of nationalist sentiments, the structural conditions of uncertainty, and the limitations of policy rationality within a multifaceted geopolitical landscape. This article structures the discussion in the following manner.

#### ***Primordial violence, hatred, and enmity***

In the initial dimension of the trinity, Clausewitz (Clausewitz, 1984) highlights that war is not merely a product of rational calculation; rather, it is profoundly influenced by emotions such as anger and hatred, as well as the societal construction of an enemy within a collective imagination (Villacres & Bassford, 1995). When this framework is applied to the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border crisis, it is evident that the clashes did not happen in isolation. The issues at hand were developed over an extended period, influenced by the

colonial legacy, the Siam–French treaties, the Annex I Map, and the Preah Vihear judgment from the International Court of Justice, which provided both parties with grounds to assert their legitimacy (Wagener, 2011; Kasetsiri et al., 2013).

In Thailand, the narrative surrounding “lost territories” serves as a fundamental aspect of nationalism, viewing the historical boundaries of Siam and its territorial losses during the colonial period as a significant national grievance. These narratives have significantly influenced perceptions of border disputes, especially concerning Preah Vihear, Ta Muen Thom, and the watershed line at Chong Bok–Chong Arn Ma. They are viewed not merely as legal or technical matters of boundary demarcation but rather as challenges to national dignity (Wagener, 2011; Chachavalpongpun, 2013). This atmosphere leads to every action concerning the boundary, be it JBC negotiations, joint demarcation, or the management of overlapping areas, being interpreted through the emotional lens of “selling out the nation vs. defending the nation,” rather than through strategic reasoning. The 2025 clashes were not viewed merely as a single event in a broader context of dispute management; rather, they were intertwined with a fundamental apprehension that Thailand might face disadvantages, territorial losses, or a symbolic “re-annexation.”

In Cambodia, Thailand is often perceived as a “bullying neighbor,” a viewpoint shaped by historical experiences of invasion and the appropriation of ancient Khmer civilization. The narratives surrounding the Khmer Empire and its territorial losses to Siam are closely linked to disputes over temples and border regions, leading to interpretations of Thai actions as “attempts to annex Cambodian land,” rather than viewing them as mere technical legal disagreements. The 2025 crisis represents a pivotal moment where two distinct forms of nationalism, Thai territorial nationalism and Cambodian nationalism focused on the pursuit of historical justice, intersected and mutually reinforced one another.

The dissemination of video footage from the petrol station in Ban Phue, which suffered a severe attack alongside a convenience store, resulting in multiple fatalities and injuries, has emerged as a significant representation of hostility. This incident has influenced Thai society to embrace militarized discourse, including

statements like “we will not cede even a single square inch of territory” and allusions to the national anthem’s line, “Thailand loves peace, but if war comes, we do not fear.” From a Clausewitzian perspective, this dimension pertains to “primordial violence,” which is associated with the populace, collective emotions, and deeply rooted perceptions of injustice (Handel, 2001; Hughes, 2021). In the absence of this emotional trigger, the transition from a localized firefight to a full-scale border crisis would not have occurred so readily. The trinity illustrates that the violence of 2025 was not solely a result of operational directives but rather emerged from a “politics of emotion” deeply embedded in historical memory and the prolonged development of the adversary.

### ***The play of chance and strategic probability***

The second dimension of the trinity encompasses “chance, uncertainty, and probability,” which Clausewitz refers to as the fog of war and friction, elements that hinder any plan from progressing in a linear fashion (Villacres & Bassford, 1995). The 2025 Thai–Cambodian crisis illustrates this dimension distinctly across operational, domestic–political, and geopolitical levels. An important event occurred on 10 November 2025 when a Thai soldier triggered a landmine. The Royal Thai Army asserted that it was a “newly laid mine inside Thai territory,” whereas Cambodia refuted this claim, stating it was a remnant from previous conflicts along the border. The primary concern in this situation extends beyond simply determining “what actually happened”; it lies in the challenge of establishing indisputable facts in the immediate timeframe. The resulting information gaps were addressed through political interpretations, discursive constructions, and strategic actions within international legal frameworks, including purported violations of the Ottawa Convention, Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, and the invocation of the right to self-defense under Article 51 (Al Jazeera, 2025c).

This phenomenon illustrates a landscape of opportunity and potential, where each party seeks to transform operational incidents into political and legal advantages. For instance, Thailand might utilize the incident to rationalize escalatory countermeasures or to leverage it in international discussions, whereas Cambodia aimed to present the case as involving “old

mines” to alleviate pressure from international humanitarian law and safeguard its international reputation.

In Thailand, the 2025 border crisis emerged concurrently with a challenge to governmental stability at the domestic political level. The audio clip involving the niece and uncle, the withdrawal of coalition parties, and the Constitutional Court’s suspension of the prime minister have resulted in a series of unforeseen developments that have notably altered the power dynamics between civilian politicians and the military. This shift has broadened the military’s operational space and enhanced its influence, while the civilian government has been left without the necessary time or resources to develop a cohesive national strategy.

The border crisis emerged within the context of strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, affecting both regional and global dynamics. The United States and China both have interests in Thailand and Cambodia. The diplomatic and economic pressure exerted by the U.S., along with the association of the crisis with human rights and treaty compliance, transformed the Thai–Cambodian frontier into a significant strategic opportunity. This situation allowed major powers to leverage the crisis to reassess and enhance their relationships and influence within the region. Cambodia may leverage the current tension as a strategic asset in negotiations with both China and the United States to secure aid and alleviate human rights scrutiny.

Within Clausewitz’s framework, these dynamics demonstrate that war does not progress according to a precise engineering model; instead, it resembles a “game of chance” where each participant aims to manipulate the probabilities to their benefit (Villacres & Bassford, 1995; Hoffman, 2017). Schuurman (2010) cautions against the premature classification of contemporary conflicts as “non-Clausewitzian” solely due to the involvement of non-state actors or intricate dynamics. This perspective may neglect the fundamental issues that still revolve around managing uncertainty, making decisions with incomplete information, and the potential for abrupt escalation. Analyzing the 2025 crisis through the lens of chance and probability elucidates that the situation did not adhere to any singular “grand plan.” Rather, it was influenced by minor occurrences, mistakes, interpretations, and intersecting strategic actions.

### ***Subordination to policy and political reason***

The third axis of the trinity presents Clausewitz's essential inquiry: war is "a continuation of policy by other means" and should be aligned with rational policy, rather than permitting the dynamics of violence to overshadow political aims (Villacres & Bassford, 1995). In the 2025 Thai-Cambodian case, it is possible to identify this situation as Thailand's "structural weak point" and as the primary reason for the unnecessary escalation of the conflict (Clauswitz, 1984; Clausewitz, 2003; Aron, 2022).

The Thai government has demonstrated a deficiency in establishing a clear and consistent security policy and border strategy, spanning from the Srettha I government to the Paetongtarn administration. The governing party did not succeed in progressing the military reform agenda it had promoted during its campaign. The position of Minister of Defence was utilized more as a tool for internal political calculations than as a platform for developing a comprehensive security strategy. As the 2025 crisis unfolded, a cabinet reshuffle resulted in the defense portfolio being left unoccupied, while actual operational authority was delegated to former generals who were appointed based on coalition quotas. This further solidified a condition resembling a "state within a state," where the military possessed significant autonomy to establish its own rules of engagement, lacking firm direction from well-defined political objectives (Paul Chambers, 2025; Saensongkram, 2025).

The integration of the various instruments of national power, politics and diplomacy, economics, military, and information, was not cohesive. The Thai government did not effectively utilize its economic and diplomatic resources in a timely and assertive manner to encourage Cambodia to re-engage in JBC negotiations and ASEAN mechanisms, despite possessing considerable leverage through economic cooperation frameworks, cross-border labor, and border trade. In contrast, the complete closure of all 798 kilometers of border crossings at a time when forces from both sides were prepared for confrontation represented a poorly timed application of measures, resulting in direct economic repercussions for border communities without yielding effective strategic advantages (Rattanabanthoeng, 2025; Thai PBS, 2025; Channel News Asia, 2025).

Mattis (2008) criticizes effects-based operations for weakening the link between political, strategic, and tactical objectives, and he calls for a return to Clausewitzian principles. The 2025 Thai-Cambodian crisis reveals the reverse problem. Although Thailand used military force and conducted various operations, it lacked clear political objectives regarding crisis resolution, the desired outcome vis-à-vis Cambodia, and the intended use of international legal and ASEAN mechanisms. Edwards (2010), in his study of the British Army in Northern Ireland, shows that military force may produce tactical gains while simultaneously undermining political legitimacy and weakening relations with the population. Similarly, in the 2025 Thai-Cambodian case, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including petrol stations, hospitals, and border communities, shaped international perceptions of both states and created opportunities for each side to invoke international humanitarian law in order to challenge the legitimacy of the other.

In this context, the trinity highlights the discrepancies among the three dimensions. The aspect of primordial violence and nationalist sentiment was significantly amplified by mass media, social media, and stringent nationalist discourse. The aspect of chance and probability illustrates a scenario where both states and significant external powers sought to leverage the crisis for political advantage but encountered growing challenges in managing the outcomes. The aspect of "policy rationality" was notably the weakest, particularly on the Thai side, where the civilian government did not establish clear political objectives and strategic directives for the military (Clauswitz, 1984; Clausewitz, 2003; Aron, 2022). According to Clausewitz, the conflict during this crisis was largely influenced by public sentiment and the unpredictable nature of events, rather than being directed by calculated policy decisions. In the 2025 Thai-Cambodian case, the state's rational dimension did not succeed in achieving the necessary balance among the three dimensions of the ideal form of the trinity. This situation posed a significant risk that Thailand might achieve short-term victories while ultimately undermining its democratic framework, long-term security, and international reputation (Mattis, 2008; Edwards, 2010; Schuurman, 2010).

## Conclusion

This article posits that the conflict along the Thai–Cambodian border must be viewed as a complex issue that transcends mere disputes over territorial boundaries or a sequence of disconnected military confrontations. It represents an “unsettled legacy” of the colonial order, characterized by ambiguous maps and International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgments, intertwined with a lengthy history of territorial loss, nationalism, and narratives of victimhood that have been amplified by mass media and social media. This situation develops within the larger Indo-Pacific geopolitical framework, where significant powers like the United States and China remain consistently involved. The 2025 crisis is interpreted as a pivotal point where the colonial legacy, an inadequately defined border, historical memory, ASEAN’s structural constraints, and domestic political instability converge, particularly highlighting the increasing involvement of the Thai military beyond its traditional security functions. This expansion underscores the shortcomings in effective civilian oversight of the armed forces and the lack of a cohesive national security strategy. Within Clausewitz’s framework of the “paradoxical trinity of war,” comprising emotional violence and hatred, the play of chance and strategic uncertainty, and subordination to rational state policy, the 2025 border crisis is analyzed as the result of the interplay and clash among heightened nationalist sentiments, the dynamics of unforeseen occurrences on the battlefield and in politics, and the limitations of Thailand’s policy-making capabilities. This configuration presents a risk for Thailand, suggesting that it may achieve short-term victories while ultimately undermining its long-term democratic integrity, security, and international standing. The article suggests that this framework may function as an analytical tool for the examination of additional border disputes in Southeast Asia.

## Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT version 5.4 and Scopus AI to assist with language editing and polishing. These tools were used solely to improve clarity, grammar, and overall readability. The manuscript was subsequently reviewed by a language expert to ensure linguistic accuracy and appropriateness. All AI-generated

suggestions were carefully reviewed and revised by the authors as necessary. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

## CRediT author statement

**Wasan Pounpunwong:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

## References

- Al Jazeera. (2025a). *Thai military reports clash with Cambodian troops at disputed border area*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/24/thai-military-reports-clash-with-cambodian-troops-at-disputed-border-area>
- Al Jazeera. (2025b). *Thailand and Cambodia reinforce troops along disputed border: Thai minister*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/7/thailand-and-cambodia-reinforce-troops-along-disputed-border-thai-minister>
- Al Jazeera. (2025c). *What we know about clashes on the Thai-Cambodian border*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/7/24/what-we-know-about-clashes-on-the-thai-cambodian-bord>
- Arab News. (2025). *Thai court sacks PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra for ethics violation*. Arab News. Retrieved from <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2613377/world>
- Aron, R. (2022). *Clausewitz: philosopher of war*. Abingdon, Oxon, England: Routledge
- Bangkok Tribune. (2025). *Thailand and Cambodia sign a peace declaration at the 47th ASEAN Summit*. Retrieved from <https://bkktribune.com/thailand-and-cambodia-sign-peace-declaration-at-47th-asean-summit/>
- BBC News Thai. (2025). *The government reveals a border clash killing 12 Thais as Cambodia urgently requests a UN Security Council meeting*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/thai/articles/c3r9g55n9ldo>

- Buckley, J. C., II. (1995). *A model of insurgency: Reflections of Clausewitz's "paradoxical trinity": Lessons for operational planners considering conventional forces in unconventional operations*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies.
- Chachavalpongpun, P. (2013). Thai-Cambodian conflict: the failure of Asean's dispute settlement mechanisms. *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 1(1), 65-86.
- Chachavalpongpun, P. (2025). *How Thai influencers profit from the Thai-Cambodian conflict*. Retrieved from <https://prachatai.com/journal/2025/09/114507>
- Channel News Asia. (2025). *Bomb drills and brinkmanship: Stakes high for Thailand, Cambodia in latest territorial tensions*. Retrieved from <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/bomb-drills-and-brinkmanship-stakes-high-thailand-cambodia-in-latest-territorial-tensions-5179621>
- Chechi, A. (2016). The 2013 judgment of the ICJ in the temple of Preah Vihear case and the protection of world cultural heritage sites in wartime. *Asian Journal of International Law*, 6(2), 353-378.
- Clausewitz, C. (2003). *On war*. London, England: Penguin Books.
- Clausewitz, C. von. (1984). *On war* (Original work published 1984). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- CNN. (2025). *Thailand-Cambodia border clashes*. CNN. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/07/24/asia/thailand-cambodia-border-clashes-friday-intl-hnk>
- Deth, S. U. (2020). *A history of Cambodia-Thailand diplomatic relations, 1950-2020* (Insights from Southeast Asia 3). Glienicke, Germany: Galda Verlag.
- Edwards, A. (2010). Misapplying lessons learned? Analysing the utility of British counterinsurgency strategy in Northern Ireland, 1971-76. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 21(2), 303-330.
- Grabowsky, V. (2017). *Heritage and nationalism in the Preah Vihear dispute* (pp. 405-448). In Gin, O. K., & Grabowsky, V. (Eds.). *Ethnic and religious identities and integration in Southeast Asia*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books.
- Haacke, J. (2023). *ASEAN and conflict management* (pp. 76-92). In Dosch, J., & Kliem, F. (Eds.). *The Elgar companion to ASEAN*. MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Handel, M. I. (2001). *Masters of war: Classical strategic thought* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London, England: Frank Cass.
- Hoffman, F. G. (2017). Will war's nature change in the seventh military revolution? *Parameters*, 47(4), 19-31.
- Horowitz, M. C. (2020). *Do Emerging Military Technologies Matter for International Politics?* Annual Reviews. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-032725>
- Hughes, O. E. (2021). *The art of strategy: Learning creative practices from the great strategists of the past*. New York: Routledge.
- Ippoodom, T. (2025). *Which kinds of nationalism are dangerous and not the solution? On the traps of nationalism with Prof. Dr. Pavin Chachavalpongpun*. Retrieved from <https://thematter.co/social/pavin-trap-nationalism/245038>
- Johnson, J. (2022). Inadvertent escalation in the age of intelligence machines: A new model for nuclear risk in the digital age. *European Journal of International Security*, 7(3), 337-359.
- Kaldor, M. (2013). In defence of new wars. *Stability: International journal of security and development*, 2(1), 1-16.
- Kasetsiri, C., Sothirak, P., & Chachavalpongpun, P. (2013). *Preah vihear: A guide to the Thai-Cambodian conflict and its solutions*. Bangkok, Thailand: White Lotus Press.
- Kraus, F. (2017). *Border disputes in Southeast Asia and their impact on the regional integration process* (pp. 46-82). In Gerstl, A., & Strasakova, M. (Eds.). *Unresolved border, land and maritime disputes in Southeast Asia: Bi- and multilateral conflict resolution approaches and ASEAN's centrality*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
- Luekajornchai, T. (2025). *Historiography of Thai nationalism: A critique of debates over lost territory* (pp. 23-46). In Hongsaton, P., & Chan,

- Y.-k. (Eds.). New directions in Thai studies. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mattis, J. N. (2008). USJFCOM Commander's guidance for effects-based operations. *Parameters*, 38(3), 18-25.
- Michaels, M., & Laksmana, E. A. (2025). *The complex fault lines of the Thai–Cambodian armed conflict: A security perspective*. Retrieved from <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2025/08/the-complex-fault-lines-of-the-thai-cambodian-armed-conflict/>
- Mueanmart, A. (2025). *Lines as thick as marker strokes! Why Cambodia's 1:200,000 map is unreliable*. Retrieved from <https://www.salika.co/2025/06/08/thailand-cambodia-map-trust-issue/>
- Newman, E. (2004). The 'new wars' debate: A historical perspective is needed. *Security dialogue*, 35(2), 173-189.
- Paul Chambers. (2025). *The Thai-Cambodian crisis has given the Thai military a boost*. Retrieved from <https://fulcrum.sg/thai-cambodian-crisis-has-given-the-thai-military-a-boost/>
- Pawakapan, P. R. (2013). *State and uncivil society in Thailand at the Temple of Preah Vihear*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Porter, P. (2007). Good anthropology, bad history: The cultural turn in studying war. *Parameters*, 37(2), 45-58.
- Ramcharan, R. (2000). ASEAN and Non-Interference: A Principle Maintained. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, 22(1), 60-88.
- Rattanabanthoeng, Y. (2025). *Analyzing the 2025 Thai–Cambodian border crisis: From war to a temporary peace*. Retrieved from <https://www.tnnthailand.com/tnnexclusive/216901/>
- Renz, B. (2016). Russia and 'hybrid warfare'. *Contemporary Politics*, 22(3), 283-300.
- Saensongkram, S. (2025). *The Thai–Cambodian conflict: A catastrophe from the absence of civilian control*. Retrieved from <https://www.the101.world/civilian-control/>
- Schuurman, B. (2010). Clausewitz and the "new wars" scholars. *Parameters*, 40(1), 89-100.
- Silobreaker. (2025). *Thailand–Cambodia border conflict: The situation in July 2025*. Retrieved from <https://www.silobreaker.com/blog/geopolitical/thailand-cambodia-border-conflict-the-situation-in-july-2025/>
- Singh, P. (2019). Of international law, semi-colonial Thailand, and imperial ghosts. *Asian Journal of International Law*, 9(1), 46-74.
- Taddeo, M. (2018). The limits of deterrence theory in cyberspace. *Philosophy & Technology*, 31, 339-355.
- Thai PBS. (2025). *Prof. Dr. Puangthong suggests Thailand should open the border for Thailand's own economic benefit*. Retrieved from <https://www.thaipbs.or.th/news/content/35648>
- The MATTER. (2025). *The day the conflict reached its peak: Summary of the Thai–Cambodian situation from this morning until now*. Retrieved from <https://thematter.co/brief/recap/thai-cambodia-clash/246995>
- The Nation. (2025). *Prime Minister explains after Hun Sen releases private conversation clip*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/asean/40051415>
- The Nation. (2025.) *Thai-Cambodian troops clash in early morning gunfire at the Chong Bok border*. The Nation. Retrieved from <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/asean/40050537>
- Touch, B. (2022). Who owns the Preah Vihear Temple? A Cambodian position (pp. 19-41). In Lee, E. Y. J. (Ed.). *ASEAN international law*. Singapore, Singapore: Springer.
- Villacres, E. J., & Bassford, C. (1995). Reclaiming the Clausewitzian trinity. *Parameters*, 25(1), 9-19.
- von Clausewitz, C. (1976). *On war* (M. Howard & P. Paret, Eds. & Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wagener, M. (2011). Lessons from Preah Vihear: Thailand, Cambodia, and the nature of low-intensity border conflicts. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 30(3), 27-59.
- Waldman, T. (2016). *War, Clausewitz and the trinity*. Abingdon, Oxon, England: Routledge.

- Win, H. (2025). *Colonial cartography and modern sovereignty: The 2025 Thailand–Cambodia border crisis and ICJ prospects* [Manuscript]. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/143055656/\\_Colonial\\_Cartography\\_and\\_Modern\\_Sovereignty\\_The\\_2025\\_Thailand\\_Cambodia\\_Border\\_Crisis\\_and\\_ICJ\\_Prospect](https://www.academia.edu/143055656/_Colonial_Cartography_and_Modern_Sovereignty_The_2025_Thailand_Cambodia_Border_Crisis_and_ICJ_Prospect)
- Wisaijorn, T. (2025). The concept of third space: Win–win solutions in the borderland of Chanthaburi (Thailand) and Battambang–Pailin (Cambodia) until the military clashes in 2025. *Area*, e70075.