



The Great Military Philosophers on Afghanistan

Video 5: Sun Tzu – Chapter 3: Planning The Attack

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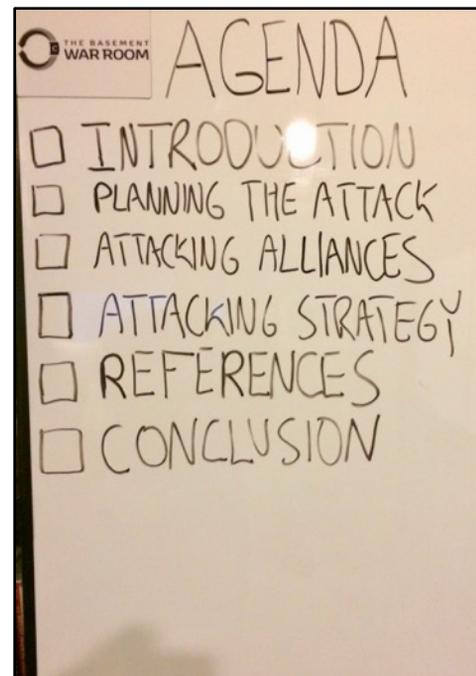
BOARD 1: AGENDA

Introduction. How on earth do you attack a strategy or alliance?

Introduce myself: Hi, I'm John Lemay and welcome to my basement war room.

Agenda: In this 5th video in The Great Military Philosophers on Afghanistan Series I'm going to explore The Art of War Chapter 3: Planning the Attack. After I highlight some of the key points in Chapter 3 I'll give examples of how to attack an alliance and strategy from the War in Afghanistan.

Transition: So let's jump right in to Planning The Attack.



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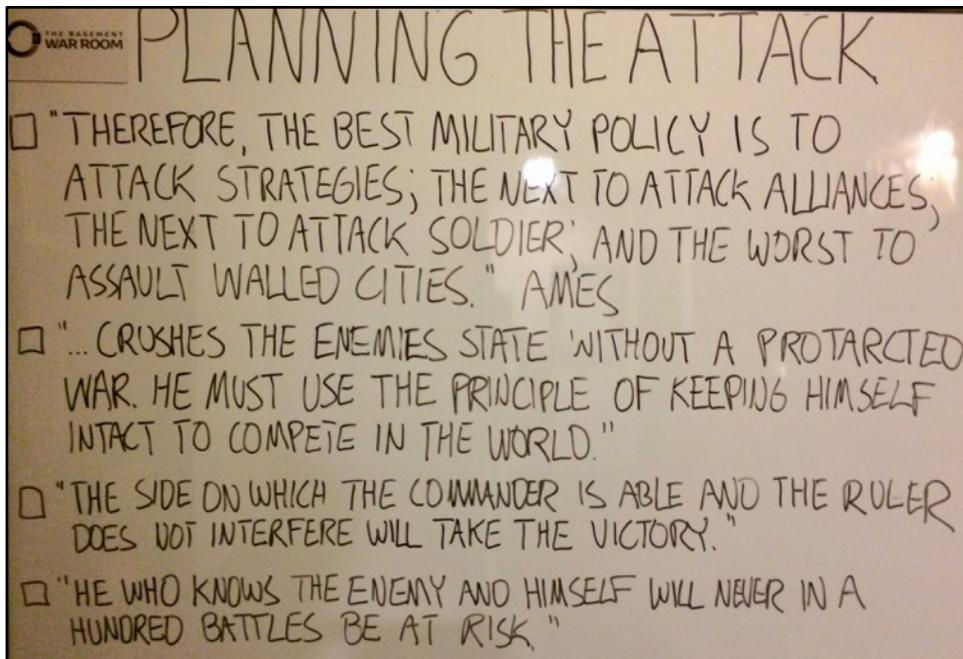
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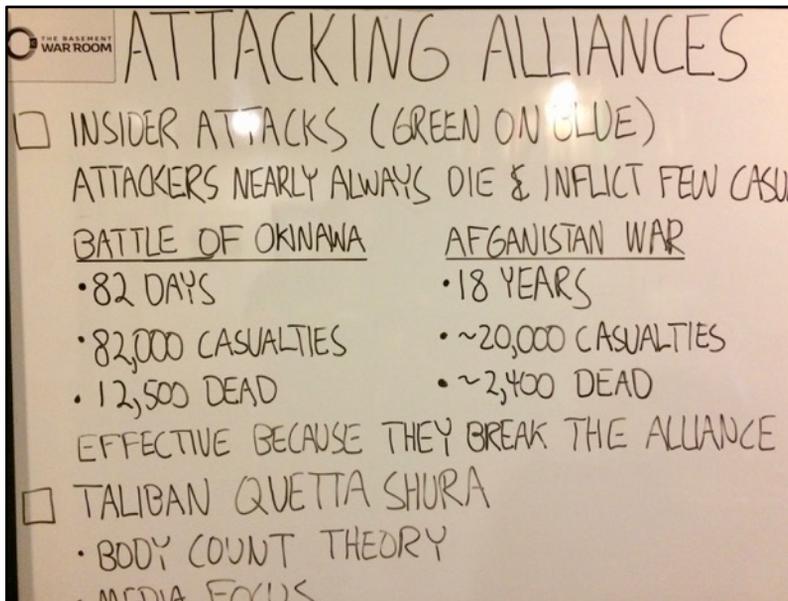
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BOARD 2: PLANNING THE ATTACK

- The quotes below highlight four of the major themes from Chapter 3.
- "So to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence; the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy's army without fighting at all. Therefore, the best military policy is to attack strategies; the next to attack alliances; the next to attack soldiers; and the worst to assault walled cities." (Ames)
- "Therefore, the expert in using the military subdues the enemy's forces without going to battle, takes the enemy's walled cities without launching an attack, and crushes the enemy's state without a protracted war. He must use the principle of keeping himself intact to compete in the world." (Ames). This is a crucial point to Sun Tzu which he stressed in Chapter 2. Near Peer Competitors.
- "The side on which the commander is able and the ruler does not interfere will take the victory." (Ames). In my opinion often quoted without serious analysis to suggest politicians "let loose" the military. Where would American be today if Abraham Lincoln hadn't been kept his hands on the rudder of the civil war?
- "He who knows the enemy and himself will never in a hundred battles be at risk; He who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes win and sometimes lose; He who knows neither the enemy nor himself will be at risk in every battle." (Ames). We will come back to this in Chapter 10.

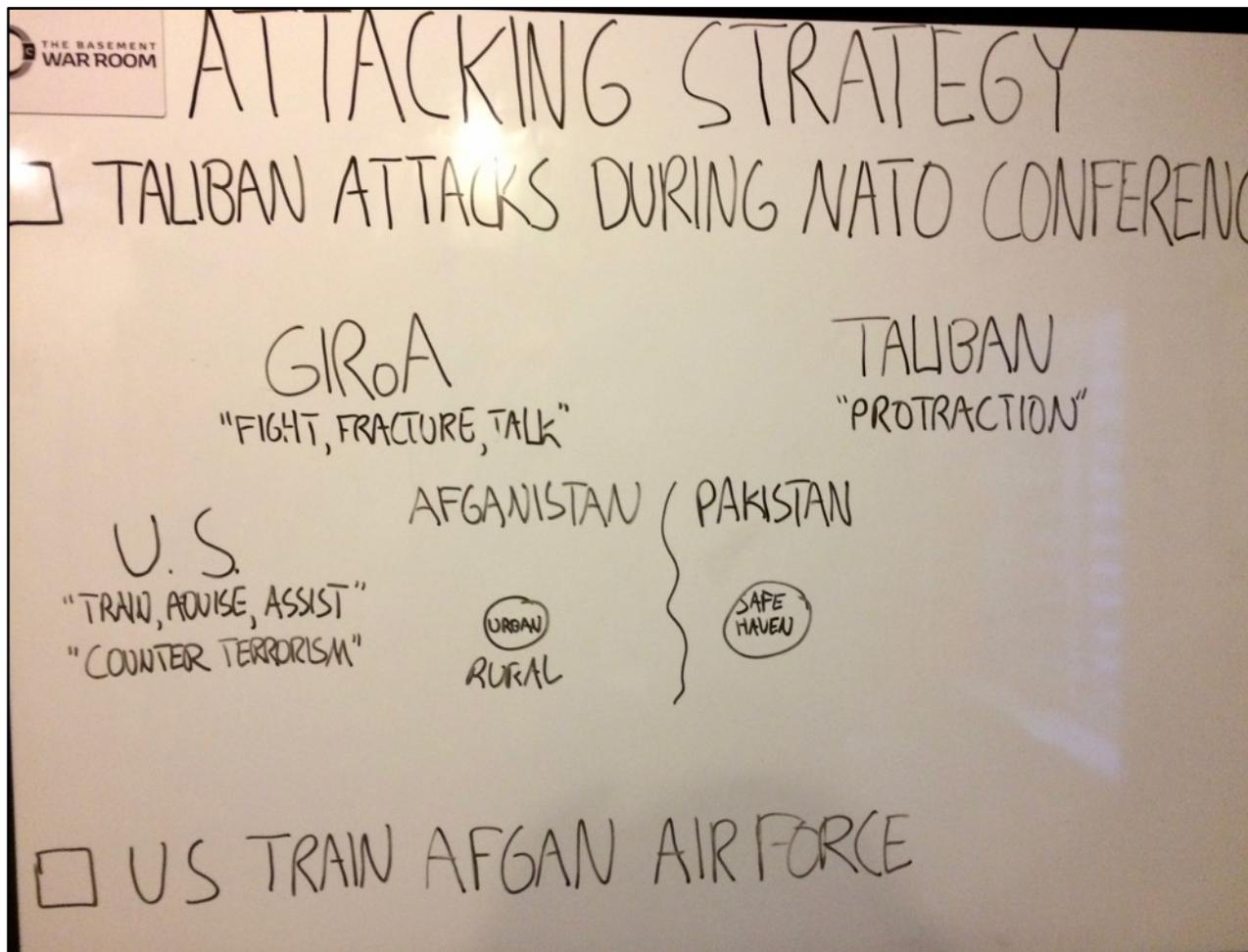




BOARD 3: ATTACKING AN ALLIANCE

- The Taliban attack the US – Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) alliance through insider attacks.
- All life is infinitely valuable, but the loss of a few Soldiers has no military significance to the United States Army. Battle of Okinawa in WW2 was 82 days, had 82,000 casualties of which 12,500 were killed - and we won. Afghanistan has around 2,400 killed and 20,000 casualties over 18 years.
- Most insider attacks are effectively suicide attacks that produce very low casualties - so why do them? It's because they attack the alliance. “Green on Blue” attacks - instances of ANDSF attacking and killing US or NATO forces really got in our head. We emplaced various “force protection” measures that hindered us from working well with the Afghans and undermined teamwork. This in turn slowed the rate at which the ANDSF became more competent and is one of the reasons they are ineffective today after 18 years of “mentorship” by the United States Military.
- Washington Post October 24, 2018: "American military officials said Wednesday that they had halted most face-to-face contacts with members of the Afghan security forces, and have temporarily withdrawn from Afghan security facilities, after two “insider” shootings in the past week that killed a top Afghan regional police commander and a Czech soldier. A spokesman for Resolute Support, the U.S.-led military mission in Afghanistan, described the move as “standard” practice after “green-on-blue” attacks — or assaults by Afghan security personnel against foreign forces. He said “regular contacts” were continuing by telephone and email between U.S. and Afghan security officials, with some meetings also taking place in U.S. facilities."
- The Taliban Quetta Shura (their leadership) are likely not brilliant Sun Tzuian strategists but rather were pursuing the “body count” theory or going for media coverage (for recruiting and internal or political reasons) and just fell into attacking the alliance.

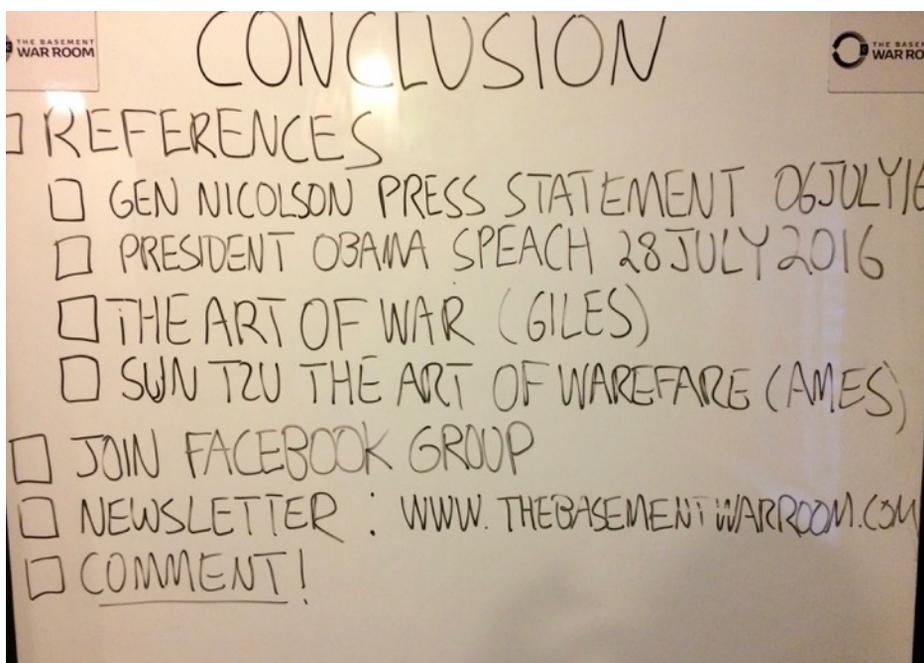




BOARD 4: ATTACKING STRATEGY

- 2016 Snapshot of the various strategies (this is a very quick and simple model of the strategies):
 - The Taliban strategy is protraction: to wage guerrilla war until the correlation of forces is favorable, then use conventional war to seize Afghanistan. However, if GIRoA controls the air then the Taliban can't mass a conventional force because it will be destroyed.
 - GIRoA strategy = "fight, fracture, talk."
 - US strategy = Train ANDSF & counter terror operations.
- Attacking Strategies:
 - Taliban focus attacks during NATO planning and resourcing (donors) conferences in order to convince NATO countries not to send trainers or provide military funding for GIRoA.
 - US attacks Taliban strategy by building an Afghan Air Force so the Taliban can never amass a conventional army without it being destroyed from the air.





REFERENCES AND CONCLUSION

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Conclusion:

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- **Please comment!**
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- Thank you for watching!

