



The Great Military Philosophers on Afghanistan

Video 6: Sun Tzu – Chapter 4: Strategic Positions

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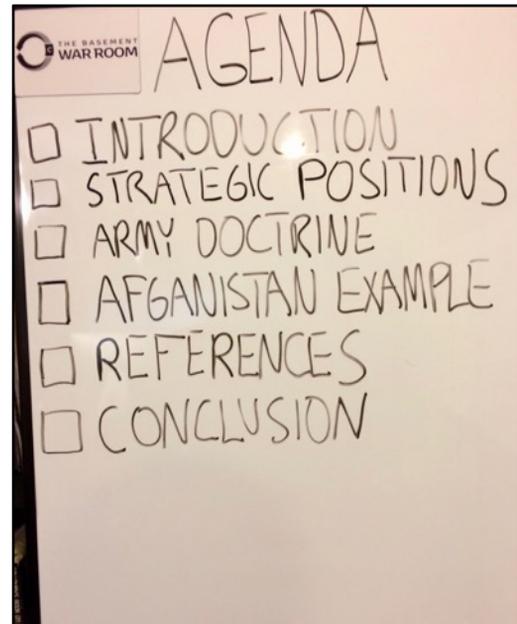
BOARD 1: AGENDA

Introduction. Can you achieve victory before entering the battle?

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

Agenda: In this 6th video in The Great Military Philosophers on Afghanistan Series I'm going to explore The Art of War Chapter 4: Strategic Positions. After I highlight some of the key points in Chapter 4 I'll discuss Army Doctrine and then give an example from Afghanistan.

Transition: So let's jump right in to Strategic Positions.



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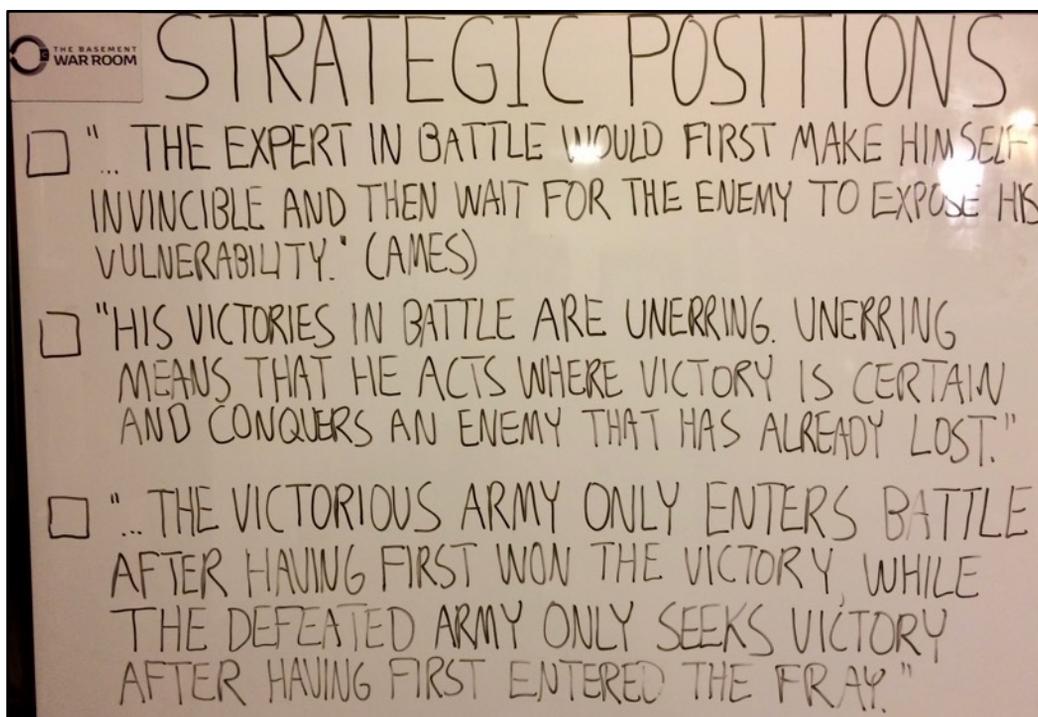
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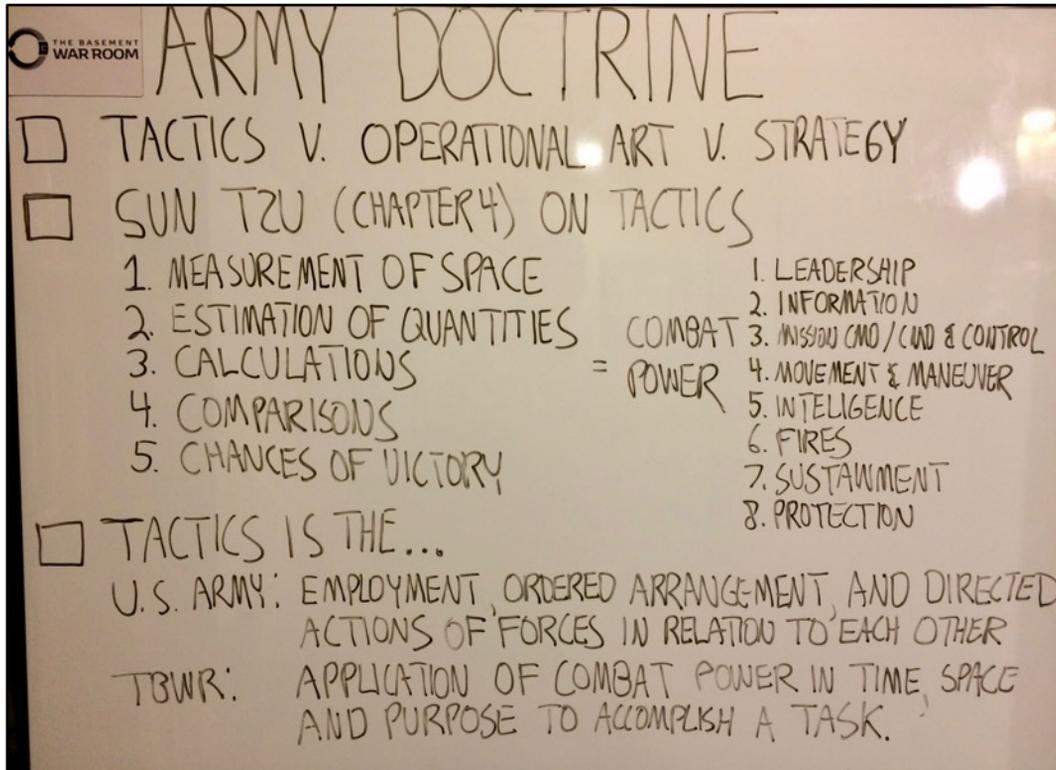
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BOARD 2: STRATEGIC POSITIONS

- The major theme of Chapter 4 is winning the battle before you fight it.
- "Of old the expert in battle would first make himself invincible and then wait for the enemy to expose his vulnerability. Invincibility depends on oneself; vulnerability lies with the enemy. Therefore the expert in battle can make himself invincible, but cannot guarantee for certain the vulnerability of the enemy." (Ames) - Taliban in Pakistan.
- "Thus the battle of the expert is never an exceptional victory, nor does it win him reputation for wisdom or credit for courage. His victories in battle are unerring. Unerring means that he acts where victory is certain, and conquers an enemy that has already lost." (Ames) - combat power, winning before fighting, air power.
- "...the victorious army only enters battle after having first won the victory, while the defeated army only seeks victory after having first entered the fray." (Ames)
- "Factors in the art of warfare are: First, calculations; second, quantities; third, logistics; fourth, the balance of power; and fifth, the possibility of victory. Calculations are based on the terrain, estimates of available quantities of goods are based on these calculations, logistical strength is based on estimates of available quantities of goods, the balance of power is based on logistical strength, and the possibility of victory is based on the balance of power." (Ames)

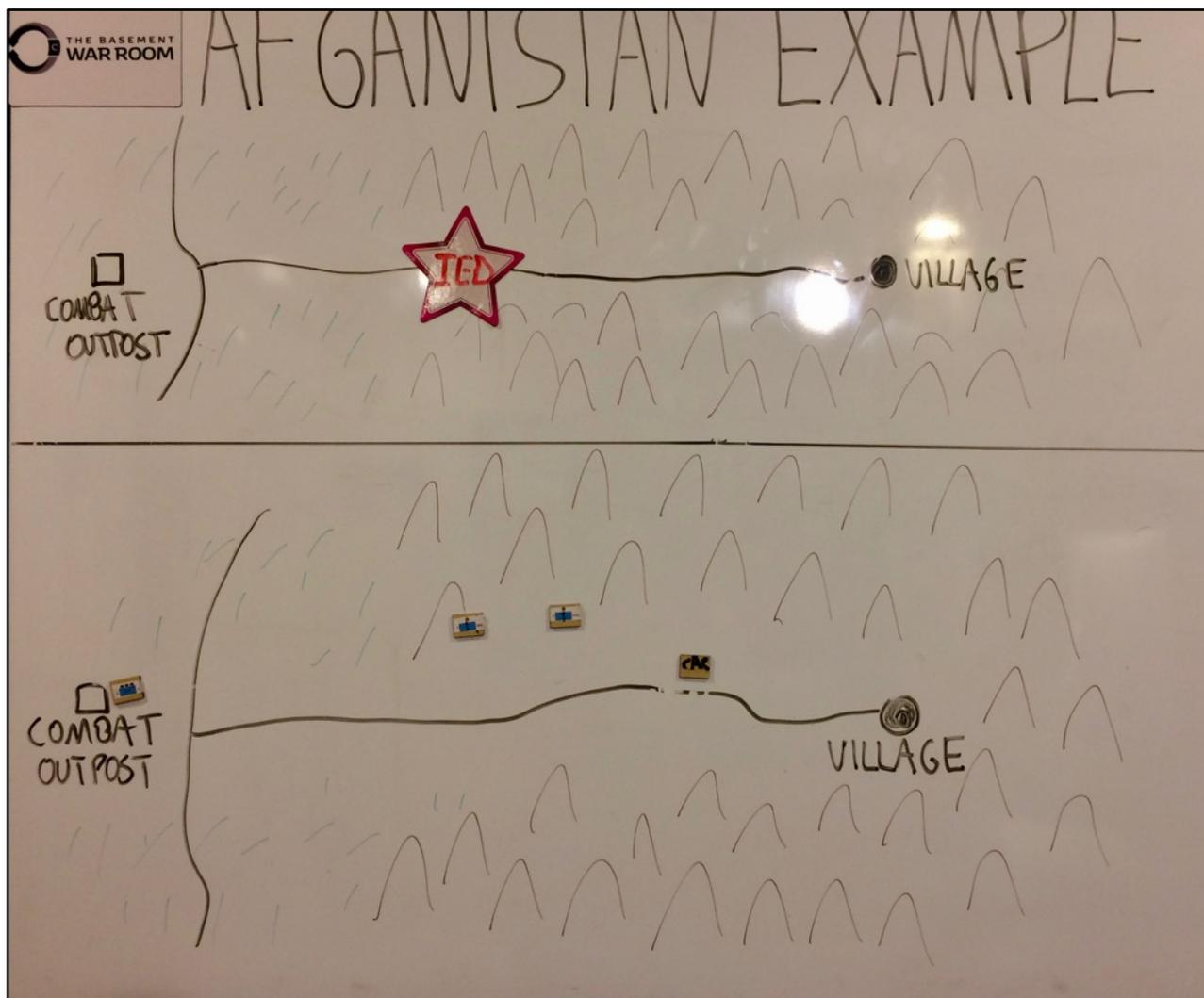




BOARD 3: ARMY DOCTRINE

- Sun Tzu “Strategic Positions” is tactics in current US Doctrine because he is focused on winning battles. It is not operational art which links tactical actions to strategic objectives.
- Tactics comes from the Greek word “arrange” or “ordered” (Friedman, p 16).
- Tactics – (DOD) The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. (ADP 1-02, p1-95); Tactics is the employment, ordered arrangement, and directed actions of forces in relation to each other. (ADP 3-90, p1-1). This is a very 19th Century definition.
- Tactics is the arrangement of military forces in such a manner as to defeat an enemy (Friedman, p 16). Defeat -> gain an advantage over.
- Combined arms – the synchronized and simultaneous application of arms to achieve an effect greater than if each element was used separately or sequentially (ADP 3-90, p1-3).
- Combat power is the total means of destructive, constructive, and information capabilities that a military unit or formation can apply at a given time (ADP 3-0). Combat power has eight elements: leadership, information, command and control, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, and protection. (ADP 3-90, p 1-4)
- Combat power is similar to Sun Tzu’s calculations, quantities, logistics, balance of power and possibility of victory. It addresses the idea of winning before fighting.
- **Tactics is the application of combat power in time, space, and purpose to accomplish a task.** Or Tactics is the synchronization of the elements of combat power to accomplish an assigned mission. (Lemay!!!)

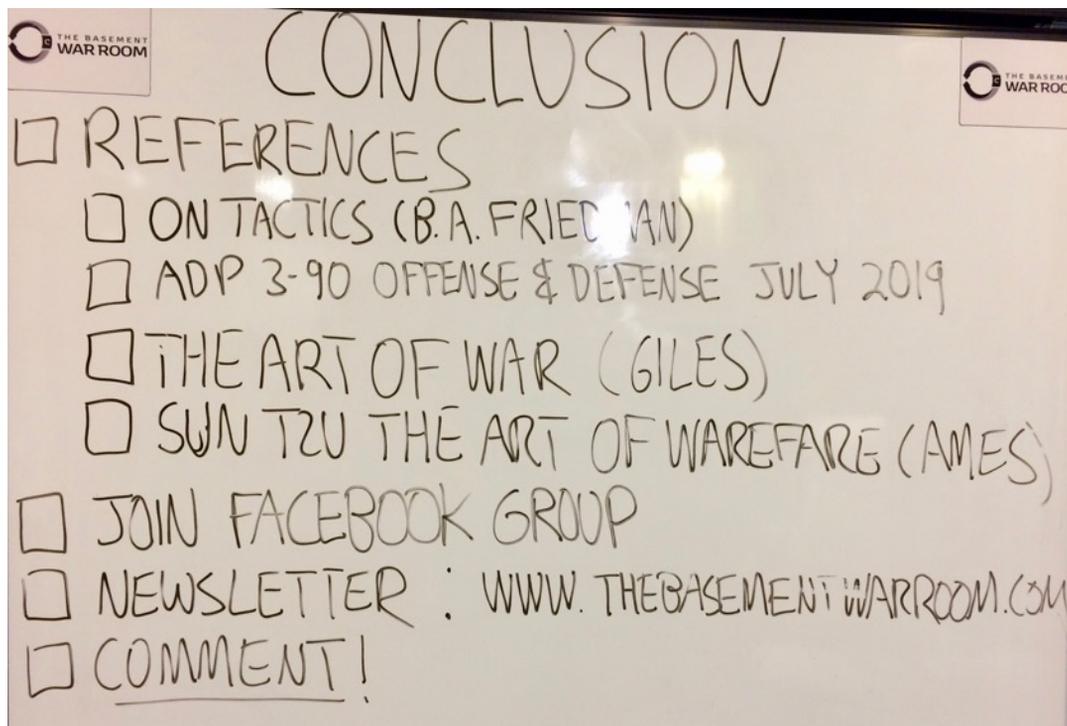




BOARD 4: AFGHANISTAN EXAMPLE

- Taliban in Pakistan = make yourself invincible first. Not 100% (drone strikes) but a good example.
- **Example of a patrol to a village in Afghanistan** - You know the enemy will trigger an IED, so place a sniper team in overwatch and have CAS on station. Compare going on patrol without setting the conditions to syncing the WFFs. 1st = defeated army seeks victory after having first entered the fray (struck the IED).
- Intelligence - pattern analysis = enemy uses IEDs - on the way out!
- M&M - sniper team.
- Fires - CAS or UAV w/ sensor.
- Mission Command - planning w/ CAS and UAV and communication with them during the operation.
- Protection - squad w/ sniper team.





REFERENCES AND CONCLUSION

References:

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Conclusion:

- If this presentation was valuable, **please join my facebook group “Lessons of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars.”** <https://www.fb.com/groups/WarLessons/>
- **Please comment!**
- Additionally, if you would like a look behind the scenes of The Basement War Room, **sign up for the newsletter on my website.** <https://mailchi.mp/83e750381519/thebasementwarroom>
- Thank you for watching!

