Influencing Leadership Behaviour

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Does strategic attack work? How does it work? This paper will suggest a methodology for designing strategic attack. It is based on the idea that we should attack what the enemy leader values, and let him know what he has to do for the attacks to stop. The aim of all military action should be to manipulate the enemy’s will. We need to coerce the enemy to do something in accordance with our strategic objectives. That is: we want to change the enemy’s behaviour. By monitoring his behaviour, we can see if our attacks are having effect. The more his behaviour changes, the more we are attacking what he values, and the more likely we will succeed in getting him to do what we want.

The process is called Axiological Targeting. Axiology is the combination of the Greek word *axios*, meaning ‘worthy,’ and *logos* meaning ‘reason’ or ‘theory.’ ‘Axiology’ is the study of values and validity.¹ The aim of axiological targeting is to focus on the overall enemy leader and engages, or threatens, what he or she most values.

In order to be effective at the strategic level, we first need to know what is the enemy’s Centre of Gravity (CoG). Secondly, we conduct CoG analysis² to discover the enemy’s vulnerabilities; this allows us to ascertain what the enemy leader values most. Finally, we complete an attack algorithm which outlines what to target, how to target and how to measure success. What will be described is a methodology for targeting the enemy leadership. It is generic, and should be applied differently to each situation.

This paper will propose a methodology for designing strategic attack, which incorporates a mechanism for measuring strategic effectiveness. It is based on the simple idea of attacking what the enemy leader values. The methodology includes psychological, sociological and geopolitical analyses, which should be conducted iteratively. It develops a process for considering which entities to attack and why, how best to attack them, and how to measure success.

Such a methodology offers the prospect of better-focused strategic attack. It is neither a ‘wonder weapon’ nor a ‘silver bullet.’ However, if conducted rigorously, it should focus intellectual effort and shape the application of the military and other instruments of state power.

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