

# Sun Tzu vs. Saruman

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*The Art of War* and *The Lord of the Rings*



# Context

- 1 Rohan is a powerful nation, with elite cavalry.
- 2 Rohan is the principal ally of Gondor, and opposes Mordor.



# Context

3 Additionally, Rohan has traditionally been aligned with Isengard, a small but powerful state led by the wizard Saruman.



# Context

4 As Mordor has re-armed, Gondor has devoted most of its energy to containing Mordor's expansion.





# Context

5 Isengard has shifted to a covert alliance with Mordor, and has begun to quietly prepare for war. It is readying a large force of enthusiastic, but ill-trained infantry.



# Context

6 Isengard has developed a robust espionage network throughout Rohan. It has shifted its economy to wartime production.



# Context

7 Simultaneously, Rohan has entered a period of political turmoil. The king has isolated himself from his traditional advisors.





# Context



P. Jackson. (2002). *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. New Zealand: New Line Cinema.

8 King Theoden's most trusted advisor is new to the court, and an agent of Isengard. He unfailingly counsels caution, and works to slow responses to the increasingly brazen troop movements from Isengard.

# Context



P. Jackson. (2002). *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. New Zealand: New Line Cinema.

9 After a political crisis triggered by an attack from Isengard, the new advisor is exiled from the court, and the King is persuaded that a full invasion is imminent. Rohan's small standing army is rushed to a fortress near the border.

# The Crisis



P. Jackson. (2002). *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. New Zealand: New Line Cinema.

# The Crisis

9 Isengard launches an invasion of Rohan, in part to crush Rohan before its reserves can be mobilized.



# The Crisis



10 To succeed in the broader war, Isengard has to consolidate control of Rohan before Gondor falls to Mordor.



## The Balance of Forces

	<b>Infantry</b>	<b>Quality</b>	<b>Cavalry</b>	<b>Quality</b>
Isengard	10,000	Conscript	0	--
Rohan	2,000	Veteran	1,000	Elite

Rohan has ~8,000 cavalry mustering; 1,000 additional infantry can be expected to arrive at the battle within days.

# The Crisis



11 Isengard's invasion is too slow to catch Rohan's forces in the field, and the king of Rohan and his best troops succeed in reaching the fortress.

# The Crisis



12 As the siege begins, Rohan's remaining commanders are mobilizing relief forces. An initial column of infantry is expected within days, and very large numbers of heavy cavalry will be ready within a fortnight.

# Questions



1 What is Saruman's strategy toward Rohan? How successful has it been? In what ways can that success be measured?

2 What elements of Isengard's strategy align with methods discussed by Sun Tzu?

# Questions



3 How do you believe Sun Tzu would regard Isengard's strategy? What evidence is there to support your conclusion?

4 What are the most important strengths and flaws of the approach adopted by Isengard?



# Questions



5 Given this context, which side would you expect to prevail in the conflict?