KNOW YOUR ENEMY

THE INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY

The target of your strategies should be less the army you face than the mind of the man or woman who runs it. If you understand how that mind works, you have the key to deceiving and controlling it. Train yourself to read people, picking up the signals they unconsciously send about their innermost thoughts and intentions. A friendly front will let you watch them closely and mine them for information. Beware of projecting your own emotions and mental habits onto them; try to think as they think. By finding your opponents' psychological weaknesses, you can work to unhinge their minds.

THE MIRRORED ENEMY

In June 1838, Lord Auckland, the British governor-general of India, called a meeting of his top officials to discuss a proposed invasion of Afghanistan. Auckland and other British ministers had become increasingly concerned at Russia's growing influence in the area. The Russians had already made an ally of Persia; they were now trying to do the same with Afghanistan, and if they were successful, the British in India would find themselves potentially cut off by land to the west and vulnerable to more incursions by the Russians. Instead of trying to outdo the Russians and negotiate an alliance with the Afghan ruler, Dost Mahomed, Auckland proposed what he thought was a surer solution: invade Afghanistan and install a new ruler--Shah Soojah, a former Afghan leader forced out of power twenty-five years earlier--who would then be indebted to the English.

> *He who knows the enemy and himself Will never in a hundred battles be at risk.*
>
> SUN-TZU, FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

[*As to the second case*] *, that of being drawn into one* [*a trap or ambush*]

...you must be shrewd about not believing easily things not in accord with reason. For example, if the enemy puts some booty before you, you ought to believe that within it there is a hook and that it conceals some trick. If many of the enemy are put to flight by your few, if a few of the enemy assail your many, if the enemy turn in sudden flight,...you ought to fear a trick. And you should never believe that the enemy does not know how to carry on his affairs; rather, if you hope to be less deceived...and...run less risk, in proportion as your enemy is weaker, in proportion as he is less cautious, you should the more respect him.

THE ART OF WAR, NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, 1521

Among the men listening to Auckland that day was William Macnaghten, the forty-five-year-old chief secretary of the Calcutta government. Macnaghten thought the invasion a brilliant idea: a friendly Afghanistan would secure British interests in the area and even help to spread British influence. And the invasion could hardly fail. The British army would have no trouble sweeping away the primitive Afghan tribesmen; they would present themselves as liberators, freeing the Afghans from Russian tyranny and bringing to the country the support and civilizing influence of England. As soon as Shah Soojah was in power, the army would leave, so that British influence over the grateful shah, although powerful, would be invisible to the Afghan public. When it came time for Macnaghten to give his opinion on the proposed invasion, his support of it was so sound and enthusiastic that Lord Auckland not only decided to go ahead, he named Macnaghten the queen's envoy to Kabul, the Afghan capital--the top British representative in Afghanistan.

Meeting little resistance along the way, in August 1839 the British army reached Kabul. Dost Mahomed fled to the mountains, and the shah reentered the city. To the local inhabitants, this was a strange sight: Shah Soojah, whom many could barely remember, looked old and submissive alongside Macnaghten, who rode into Kabul wearing a bright-colored uniform topped by a cocked hat fringed with ostrich feathers. Why had these people come? What were they doing here?

With the shah back in power, Macnaghten had to reassess the situation. Reports came in informing him that Dost Mahomed was building an army in the mountains to the north. Meanwhile, to the south, it seemed that in invading the country the British had insulted some local chieftains by plundering their lands for food. These chiefs were now stirring up trouble. It was also clear that the shah was unpopular with his former subjects, so unpopular that Macnaghten could not leave him and other British interests in the country unprotected. Reluctantly Macnaghten ordered most of the British army to remain in

Afghanistan until the situation was stabilized.

Time went by, and eventually Macnaghten decided to allow the officers and soldiers of this increasingly long-standing occupying force to send for their families, so that life would be less harsh for them. Soon the wives and children came, along with their Indian servants. But where Macnaghten had imagined that the arrival of the soldiers' families would have a humanizing, civilizing effect, it only alarmed the Afghans. Were the British planning a permanent occupation? Everywhere the local people looked, there were representatives of British interests, talking loudly in the streets, drinking wine, attending theaters and horse races--strange imported pleasures that they had introduced to the country. Now their families were making themselves at home. A hatred of everything English began to take root.

THE AGING LION AND THE FOX

A lion who was getting old and could no longer obtain his food by force decided that he must resort to trickery instead. So he retired to a cave and lay down pretending to be ill. Thus, whenever any animals came to his cave to visit him, he ate them all as they appeared. When many animals had disappeared, a fox figured out what was happening. He went to see the lion but stood at a safe distance outside the cave and asked him how he was. "Oh, not very well," said the lion. "But why don't you come in?" But the fox said: "I would come inside if I hadn't seen that a lot of footprints are pointing inwards towards your cave but none are pointing out." Wise men note the indications of dangers and thus avoid them.

FABLES, AESOP, SIXTH CENTURY B.C.

There were those who warned Macnaghten about this, and to all of them he had the same answer: everything would be forgotten and forgiven when the army left Afghanistan. The Afghans were childlike, emotional people; once they felt the benefits of English civilization, they would be more than grateful. One matter, however, did worry the envoy: the British government was unhappy about the increasing expense of the occupation. Macnaghten would have to do something to cut costs, and he knew just where to begin.

Most of the mountain passes through which Afghanistan's main trade routes ran were held by the Ghilzye tribes, who for many years, over the lives of many different rulers of the country, had been paid a stipend to keep the passes open. Macnaghten decided to halve this stipend. The Ghilzyes responded by blocking

the passes, and elsewhere in the country tribes sympathetic to the Ghilzyes rebelled. Macnaghten, caught off guard, tried to put these rebellions down, but he did not take them too seriously, and worried officers who told him to respond more vigorously were rebuked for overreacting. Now the British army would have to stay indefinitely.

The situation deteriorated quickly. In October 1841 a mob attacked the home of a British official and killed him. In Kabul local chiefs began to conspire to expel their British overlords. Shah Soojah panicked. For months he had begged Macnaghten to let him capture and kill his main rivals, an Afghan ruler's traditional method of securing his position. Macnaghten had told him that a civilized country did not use murder to solve its political problems. The shah knew that the Afghans respected strength and authority, not "civilized" values; to them his failure to deal with his enemies made him look weak and unrulerlike and left him surrounded by enemies. Macnaghten would not listen.

The rebellion spread, and Macnaghten now had to confront the fact that he did not have the manpower to put down a general uprising. But why should he panic? The Afghans and their leaders were naive; he would regain the upper hand through intrigue and cleverness. To that end, Macnaghten publicly negotiated an agreement whereby British troops and citizens would leave Afghanistan, in exchange for which the Afghans would supply the retreating British with food. Privately, though, Macnaghten made it known to a few key chiefs that he was willing to make one of them the country's vizier--and load with him money--in exchange for putting down the rebellion and allowing the English to stay.

> *Bait.--"Everyone has his price"--this is not true. But there surely exists for everyone a bait he cannot help taking. Thus to win many people over to a cause one needs only to put on it a gloss of philanthropy, nobility, charitableness, self-sacrifice--and on to what cause can one not put it?--: these are the sweetmeats and dainties for their soul; others have others.*
>
> *HUMAN, ALL TOO HUMAN, FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1886*

The chief of the eastern Ghilzyes, Akbar Khan, responded to this offer, and on December 23, 1841, Macnaghten rode out for a private meeting with him to seal the bargain. After exchanging greetings Akbar asked Macnaghten if he wanted to go ahead with the treachery they were planning. Thrilled to have turned the situation around, Macnaghten cheerily answered that he did. Without a word of explanation, Akbar signaled his men to grab Macnaghten and throw him in prison--he had no intention of betraying the other chiefs. Along the way a

mob developed, caught hold of the unfortunate envoy, and with a fury built up over years of humiliation literally tore him to pieces. His limbs and head were paraded through the streets of Kabul, and his torso was hung from a meat hook in the bazaar.

In a matter of days, everything unraveled. The remaining British troops--some 4,500 of them, along with 12,000 camp followers--were forced to agree to an immediate retreat from Afghanistan, despite the bitter winter weather. The Afghans were to keep the retreating army supplied but did not do so. Certain that the British would never leave unless forced to, they harassed them relentlessly in their retreat. Civilians and soldiers alike quickly perished in the snow.

On January 13, British forces at the fort in Jalalabad saw a single horse struggling toward the gates. Its half-dead rider, Dr. William Brydon, was the sole survivor of the British army's doomed invasion of Afghanistan.

Interpretation The knowledge that would have averted the catastrophe was at Macnaghten's fingertips long before he launched the expedition. Englishmen and Indians who had lived in Afghanistan could have told him that the Afghan people were among the proudest and most independent on the planet. To them the image of foreign troops marching into Kabul would constitute an unforgivable humiliation. On top of that, they were not a people yearning for peace, prosperity, and reconciliation. In fact, they saw strife and confrontation as a healthy way of life.

Macnaghten had the information but refused to see it. Instead he projected onto the Afghans the values of an Englishman, which he mistakenly assumed were universal. Blinded by narcissism, he misread every signal along the way. As a result his strategic moves--leaving the British army occupying Kabul, halving the Ghilzyes' stipend, trying not to overplay his hand in putting down the rebellions--were exactly the opposite of what was needed. And on that fateful day when he literally lost his head, he made the ultimate miscalculation, imagining that money and an appeal to self-interest would buy loyalty among the very people he had so humiliated.

Blindness and narcissism like this are not so rare; we find them every day. Our natural tendency is to see other people as mere reflections of our own desires and values. Failing to understand the ways they are not like us, we are surprised when they do not respond as we had imagined. We unintentionally offend and alienate people, then blame them, not our inability to understand them, for the damage done.

Understand: if you let narcissism act as a screen between you and other people, you will misread them and your strategies will misfire. You must be aware of this and struggle to see others dispassionately. Every individual is like an alien culture. You must get inside his or her way of thinking, not as an exercise in sensitivity but out of strategic necessity. Only by knowing your enemies can you ever hope to vanquish them.

Be submissive so that he will trust you and you will thereby learn about his true situation. Accept his ideas and respond to his affairs as if you were twins. Once you have learned everything, subtly gather in his power. Thus when the ultimate day arrives, it will seem as if Heaven itself destroyed him.

--*Tai Kung*, Six Secret Teachings *(circa fourth century B.C.)*

THE CLOSE EMBRACE

In 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte humiliated the Austrians in the battles of Ulm and Austerlitz. In the subsequent treaty, he carved up the Austrian Empire, taking over its lands in Italy and Germany. For Napoleon all this was one part of a chess game. His ultimate goal was to make Austria an ally--a weak and subordinate ally, but one that would lend him weight in the courts of Europe, since Austria had been a central force in European politics. As part of this overall strategy, Napoleon requested a new Austrian ambassador to France: Prince Klemens von Metternich, at the time the Austrian ambassador to the Prussian court in Berlin.

Confucius's evaluation of Yang Hu, a man who had been forced to flee from one state to another because he proved greedy and disloyal each time he acquired power, provides a simple example of projecting behavior on the basis of constancy. Based upon this repeated behavioral pattern, Confucius accurately predicted that Yang Hu would certainly suffer an ignominious end. More generally, Mencius subsequently stated: "A man who ceases his efforts where he should not will abandon them anywhere. A man who is parsimonious with those with whom he should be generous will be parsimonious everywhere." Granting that people generally acquire fixed habits early in life, a man's end may therefore be foreseen by midlife: "Someone who is still disliked at forty years of age will end by being so."

RALPH D. SAWYER, *THE TAO OF SPYCRAFT*, 1998

Metternich, then thirty-two, came from one of Europe's most illustrious

families. A speaker of impeccable French, a staunch conservative in politics, he was a paragon of breeding and elegance and an inveterate ladies' man. The presence of this polished aristocrat would add a sheen to the imperial court that Napoleon was creating. More important, winning over a man of such power--and Napoleon could be quite seductive in private meetings--would help in his grand strategy of making Austria a weak satellite. And Metternich's weakness for women would give Napoleon a way in.

The two men met for the first time in August 1806, when Metternich presented his credentials. Napoleon acted coolly. He dressed well for the occasion but kept his hat on, which in the mores of the time was rather rude. After Metternich's speech--short and ceremonious--Napoleon began to pace the room and talk politics in a way that made it clear he was in command. (He liked to stand up to talk to people while they remained seated.) He made a show of speaking pointedly and concisely; he was not some Corsican rube for the sophisticated Metternich to play with. In the end he was sure he had made the impression he wanted.

> *Coordination is less of a problem when political leaders themselves play an active part in the intelligence effort. When he was Senate majority leader, Lyndon Johnson cultivated an extensive intelligence system with sources all over Washington. At one point in the 1950s, Johnson complained to a reporter that he was focusing on internal Democratic problems while failing to cover divisions in the Senate GOP. To make his point, he pulled out a memorandum on a recent private meeting at which the reporter and several of his colleagues had gotten a briefing on GOP factionalism from Senator Thurston Morton (R-KY). Rowland Evans and Robert Novak recalled: "The Intelligence System was a marvel of efficiency. It was also rather frightening." Even in the White House, Johnson believed in firsthand political intelligence. According to his aide Harry McPherson, "I guess he called a lot of people, but I could usually count on it in the late afternoon, as he woke up from his nap, that I would get a call which would usually say, 'What do you know?'" McPherson would then pass along the latest news that he picked up from reporters and political figures.*
>
> *THE ART OF POLITICAL WARFARE*, JOHN J. PITNEY, JR., 2000

Over the months to come, Napoleon and Metternich had many more such meetings. It was the emperor's plan to charm the prince, but the charm ran inescapably the other way: Metternich had a way of listening attentively, making apt comments, even complimenting Napoleon on his strategic insights. At those

moments Napoleon would beam inside: here was a man who could truly appreciate his genius. He began to crave Metternich's presence, and their discussions of European politics became more and more frank. The two became friends of sorts.

Hoping to take advantage of Metternich's weakness for women, Napoleon set up his sister, Caroline Murat, to have an affair with the prince. He learned from her a few pieces of diplomatic gossip, and she told him that Metternich had come to respect him. In turn she also told Metternich that Napoleon was unhappy with his wife, Empress Josephine, who could not bear children; he was considering divorce. Napoleon did not seem upset that Metternich knew such things about his personal life.

In 1809, seeking revenge for its ignominious defeat at Austerlitz, Austria declared war on France. Napoleon only welcomed this event, which gave him a chance to beat the Austrians still more soundly than before. The war was hard fought, but the French prevailed, and Napoleon imposed a humiliating settlement, annexing whole sections of the Austrian Empire. Austria's military was dismantled, its government was overhauled, and Napoleon's friend Metternich was named foreign minister--exactly where Napoleon wanted him.

Several months later something happened that caught Napoleon slightly off guard but delighted him: the Austrian emperor offered him his eldest daughter, the Archduchess Marie Louise, in marriage. Napoleon knew that the Austrian aristocracy hated him; this had to be Metternich's work. Alliance by marriage with Austria would be a strategic tour de force, and Napoleon happily accepted the offer, first divorcing Josephine, then marrying Marie Louise in 1810.

Metternich accompanied the archduchess to Paris for the wedding, and now his relationship with Napoleon grew still warmer. Napoleon's marriage made him a member of one of Europe's greatest families, and to a Corsican, family was everything; he had won a dynastic legitimacy he had long craved. In conversation with the prince, he opened up even more than before. He was also delighted with his new empress, who revealed a keen political mind. He let her in on his plans for empire in Europe.

In 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia. Now Metternich came to him with a request: the formation of an army of 30,000 Austrian soldiers at Napoleon's disposal. In return Napoleon would let Austria rebuild its military. Napoleon saw no harm in this step; he was allied with Austria by marriage, and rearmament there would help him in the end.

Months later the Russian invasion had turned into a disaster, and Napoleon was forced to retreat, his army decimated. Now Metternich offered his services as a mediator between France and the other European powers. Centrally placed

as it is, Austria had performed that task in the past, and anyway Napoleon had little choice: he needed time to recoup. Even if Austria's role as a mediator allowed it to reassert its independence, he had little to fear from his in-laws.

> *In all the martial arts, in all the performing arts and still more in all the forms of human behavior, a man's postures or moves are based on the movements of his* [*invisible*] *mind.... In the Kage Style of swordsmanship a swordsman reads his opponent's mind through his postures or moves.... What mind can penetrate his opponent's mind? It is a mind that has been trained and cultivated to the point of detachment with perfect freedom. It is as clear as a mirror that can reflect the motions within his opponent's mind.... When one stands face to face with his opponents, his mind must not be revealed in the form of moves. Instead his mind should reflect his opponent's mind like water reflecting the moon.*
>
> *LIVES OF MASTER SWORDSMEN*, MAKOTO SUGAWARA, 1988

By the spring of 1813, negotiations had broken down and a new war was about to break out between the badly damaged France and a powerful alliance of Russia, Prussia, England, and Sweden. By this time the Austrian army had grown considerably; somehow Napoleon had to get his hands on it--but his spies reported that Metternich had entered into secret agreement with the Allies. Surely this had to be some sort of ploy: how could the Austrian emperor fight his son-in-law? Yet in a few weeks, it became official: unless France negotiated a peace, Austria would drop its mediating position and join the Allies.

Napoleon could not believe what he was hearing. He traveled to Dresden for a meeting with Metternich, which took place on June 26. The moment he saw the prince, he felt a shock: the friendly, nonchalant air was gone. In a rather cold tone, Metternich informed him that France must accept a settlement that would reduce it to its natural boundaries. Austria was obligated to defend its interests and the stability of Europe. Suddenly it occurred to the emperor: Metternich had been playing him all along, the family ties merely a ploy to blind him to Austrian rearmament and independence. "So I have perpetrated a very stupid piece of folly in marrying an archduchess of Austria?" Napoleon blurted out. "Since Your Majesty desires to know my opinion," Metternich replied, "I will candidly say that Napoleon, the conqueror, has made a mistake."

Napoleon refused to accept Metternich's dictated peace. In return Austria dropped its neutrality and joined the Allies, becoming their de facto military leader. And with Austria leading the way, they finally defeated Napoleon in April 1814 and exiled him to the Mediterranean island of Elba.

Interpretation Napoleon prided himself on his ability to gauge people's psychology and use it against them, but in this case he was outwitted by a man far superior at such a game. Metternich's modus operandi was the following: he would quietly study his enemies from behind his smiling, elegant exterior, his own apparent relaxation inviting them to open up. In his very first meeting with Napoleon, he saw a man straining to impress: he noticed that the bantam Napoleon walked on his toes, to look taller, and struggled to suppress his Corsican accent. Later meetings only confirmed Metternich's impression of a man who craved acceptance as the social equal of Europe's aristocracy. The emperor was insecure.

This insight won, Metternich used it to craft the perfect counter-strategy: the offer of marriage into the Austrian dynasty. To a Corsican, that would mean everything, and it would blind Napoleon to a simple reality: for aristocrats like Metternich and the Austrian emperor, family ties meant nothing compared to the survival of the dynasty itself.

> *When Munenori was granted an audience with the shogun, he sat down, put his hands on the tatami floor, as retainers always did to show their respect to their master. Suddenly, Iemitsu thrust a spear at the "unsuspecting" Munenori--and was surprised to find himself lying flat on his back! Munenori had sensed the shogun's intention before a move had been made, and swept Iemitsu's legs out from under him at the instant of the thrust.*
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> *LIVES OF MASTER SWORDSMEN*, MAKOTO SUGAWARA, 1988

Metternich's genius was to recognize the appropriate target for his strategy: not Napoleon's armies, which Austria could not hope to defeat--Napoleon was a general for the ages--but Napoleon's mind. The prince understood that even the most powerful of men remains human and has human weaknesses. By entering Napoleon's private life, being deferential and subordinate, Metternich could find his weaknesses and hurt him as no army could. By getting closer to him emotionally--through the emperor's sister Caroline, through the Archduchess Marie Louise, through their convivial meetings--he could choke him in a friendly embrace.

Understand: your real enemy is your opponent's mind. His armies, his resources, his intelligence, can all be overcome if you can fathom his weakness, the emotional blind spot through which you can deceive, distract, and manipulate him. The most powerful army in the world can be beaten by

unhinging the mind of its leader.

And the best way to find the leader's weaknesses is not through spies but through the close embrace. Behind a friendly, even subservient front, you can observe your enemies, get them to open up and reveal themselves. Get inside their skin; think as they think. Once you discover their vulnerability--an uncontrollable temper, a weakness for the opposite sex, a gnawing insecurity--you have the material to destroy them.

War is not an act of the will aimed at inanimate matter, as it is in the mechanical arts.... Rather, [*it*] *is an act of the will aimed at a living entity that* reacts.

--Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831)

KEYS TO WARFARE

The greatest power you could have in life would come neither from limitless resources nor even consummate skill in strategy. It would come from clear knowledge of those around you--the ability to read people like a book. Given that knowledge, you could distinguish friend from foe, smoking out snakes in the grass. You could anticipate your enemies' malice, pierce their strategies, and take defensive action. Their transparency would reveal to you the emotions they could least control. Armed with that knowledge, you could make them tumble into traps and destroy them.

This kind of knowledge has been a military goal since the dawn of history. That is why the arts of intelligence gathering and spying were invented. But spies are unreliable; they filter information through their own preconceptions and prejudices, and since their trade places them precisely between one side and the other and forces them to be independent operators, they are notoriously hard to control and can turn against you. Then, too, the nuances that give people away--the tone in a speaker's voice, the look in his or her eyes--are inevitably missing from their reports. In the end the spy's information means nothing unless you are adept at interpreting human behavior and psychology. Without that skill you will see in it what you want to see, confirming your own prejudices.

The leaders who have made best use of intelligence--Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Prince Metternich, Winston Churchill, Lyndon Johnson during his career in the U.S. Senate--were all first and foremost great students of human nature and superior readers of men. They honed their skills through personal observation of people. Only with that foundation could the use of spies extend

their powers of vision.

> *In my opinion, there are two kinds of eyes: one kind simply looks at things and the other sees through things to perceive their inner nature. The former should not be tense* [*so as to observe as much as possible*] *; the latter should be strong* [*so as to discern the workings of the opponent's mind clearly*] *. Sometimes a man can read another's mind with his eyes. In fencing, it is all right to allow your own eyes to express your will but never let them reveal your mind. This matter should be considered carefully and studied diligently.*
>
> MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, 1584-1645

The first step in the process is to get over the idea that people are impenetrable mysteries and that only some trick will let you peek into their souls. If they seem mysterious, it is because almost all of us learn to disguise our true feelings and intentions from an early age. If we went around showing just how we felt and telling people what we planned to do, we would make ourselves vulnerable to malice, and if we always spoke our minds, we would offend a lot of people unnecessarily. So as we grow up, concealing much of what we are thinking becomes second nature.

This deliberate opacity makes the intelligence game difficult but not impossible. For even as people consciously struggle to conceal what is going on in their minds, they unconsciously want to reveal themselves. Hiding how we feel in social situations is exhausting; being able to show ourselves is a relief. We secretly want people to know us, even including our dark side. Even while we consciously struggle to control this hidden yearning, unconsciously we are always sending out signals that reveal a part of what is going on inside--slips of the tongue, tones of voice, styles of dress, nervous twitches, sudden irrational actions, a look in the eye that contradicts our words, the things we say after a drink.

> Anger as spy. --*Anger empties out the soul and brings even its dregs to light. That is why, if we know no other way of discovering the truth of the matter, we must know how to put our acquaintances, our adherents and opponents, into a rage, so as to learn all that is really being thought and undertaken against us.*
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> *HUMAN, ALL TOO HUMAN,* FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1886

Understand: day in and day out, people emit signals that reveal their intentions and deepest desires. If we do not pick them up, it is because we are

not paying attention. The reason for this is simple: we are usually locked up in our own worlds, listening to our internal monologues, obsessed with ourselves and with satisfying our own egos. Like William Macnaghten, we tend to see other people merely as reflections of ourselves. To the extent that you can drop your self-interest and see people for who they are, divorced from your desires, you will become more sensitive to their signals.

The ability to read people was a critical survival skill for Japanese samurai and was particularly emphasized by the Shinkage school of swordsmanship. One of the school's earliest masters was the seventeenth-century samurai Yagyu Munenori. One spring afternoon in his later years, Munenori was taking a peaceful walk through his gardens, admiring the cherry blossoms. He was accompanied by a page/protector, who walked behind him, sword raised, as was the custom. Suddenly Munenori stopped in his tracks. He had a feeling of danger. Looking around, he saw nothing to warrant this feeling, but even so he was so troubled that he returned to his house and sat with his back against a post to prevent a surprise attack.

> *Then David fled from Nai'oth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" And he said to him, "Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me; and why should my father hide this from me? It is not so." But David replied, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes; and he thinks, 'Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death." Then said Jonathan to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king; but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant; but if he is angry, then know that evil is determined by him."...And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.... So David hid himself in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. The king sat upon his seat, as at other times, upon the seat by the wall; Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Yet Saul did not say anything that day; for he thought, "Something has befallen him; he is not clean, surely he is not clean." But on the second day, the morrow after the new moon, David's place*

was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem; he said, 'Let me go; for our family holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away, and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table." Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and fetch him to me, for he shall surely die." Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" But Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; so Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

1 SAMUEL 20:1-11, 24-34

After Munenori had sat there for a while, his page asked him what was the matter. The samurai confessed that while looking at the cherry blossoms he had had an intimation of imminent danger, of an enemy on the attack. What troubled him now was that the danger had apparently been imaginary--he must have hallucinated it. A samurai depended on his keen instincts to anticipate attack. If Munenori had lost that power, his life as a warrior was over.

Suddenly the page threw himself to the ground and confessed: as Munenori walked in the garden, the thought had come to the page that if he were to strike at his master while the samurai was lost in admiration of the cherry blossoms, not even this gifted swordsman could have parried his attack. Munenori had not lost his skill at all; quite the contrary--his incomparable sensitivity to other people's emotions and thoughts had allowed him to pick up sensations from someone behind his back, rather as a horse senses the energy of its rider or a dog the movements of its owner. An animal has that sensitivity because it pays complete attention. Similarly, the Shinkage school taught warriors to empty their minds, centering themselves in the moment as animals did and keeping themselves from getting derailed by any particular thought. This would allow the Shinkage warrior to read in his opponent's elbow or hand the slight tension that signaled an attack; he could look through his opponent's eyes and sense the coming blow or notice the nervous shuffle of the feet that indicated fear or

confusion. A master like Munenori could virtually read someone's thoughts when the other person wasn't even visible.

The power taught by the Shinkage school--the same power possessed by Prince Metternich--was the ability to let go of one's ego, to submerge oneself temporarily in the other person's mind. You will be amazed at how much you can pick up about people if you can shut off your incessant interior monologue, empty your thoughts, and anchor yourself in the moment. The details you now see give you unfiltered information from which you can put together an accurate picture of people's weaknesses and desires. Be particularly attentive to their eyes: it takes a lot of effort to hide the eyes' message about a person's state of mind.

According to the baseball pitcher Bob Lemon, the great player Ted Williams "was the only hitter who you felt saw through you." In the struggle between pitcher and batter, the pitcher has the advantage of knowing what pitch he will throw. The hitter can only guess at that, which is why even the best of them usually connect only one out of every three or four times. Somehow Williams changed those odds.

Williams's method wasn't magic, or even intuition; it was simple enough. He made baseball pitchers his study, watching their patterns over the course of a game, a season, a career. He would ask the pitchers on his own team endless questions about their process, trying to get a feel for how they thought. At the plate he would empty his mind of everything but the pitcher, noticing the slightest hitch in his windup or change in his grip--anything that would signal his intentions. The end result seemed uncanny: at bat, Williams was able to think himself into the pitcher's mind and anticipate the pitch that was coming. Sometimes he would even see himself as another person--a pitcher trying to outwit the great hitter Ted Williams. As Williams demonstrates, the ability to mimic and get inside your enemies' thought patterns depends on collecting as much information on them as you can, analyzing their past behavior for its habitual patterns, and being alert to the signs they give off in the present.

It is of course critical that people be unaware you are watching them so closely. A friendly front, like Prince Metternich's to Napoleon, will help disguise what you're doing. Do not ask too many questions; the trick is to get people to relax and open up without prodding, shadowing them so quietly that they never guess what you're really up to.

Information is useless unless you know how to interpret it, how to use it to tell appearance from reality. You must learn how to recognize a range of psychological types. Be alert, for instance, to the phenomenon of the masked opposite: when someone strikingly manifests a particular personality trait, that

trait may well be a cover-up. The oily character who is ingratiatingly effusive with flattery may be hiding hostility and ill will; the aggressive bully may be hiding insecurity; the moralizer may be making a show of purity to hide nefarious desires. Whether they're throwing dust in your eyes or their own--they may be trying to convince themselves that they're not what they're afraid they are--the opposite trait lurks below the surface.

In general, it is easier to observe people in action, particularly in moments of crisis. Those are the times when they either reveal their weakness or struggle so hard to disguise it that you can see through the mask. You can actively probe them by doing things that seem harmless but get a response--maybe say something bold or provocative, then see how they react. Making people emotional, pushing their buttons, will touch some deep part of their nature. Either they will let slip some truth about themselves or they will put on a mask that you, in the laboratory situation you have created, will be able to peer behind.

A critical part of understanding people is gauging their powers of resistance. Without that knowledge you will either over-or underestimate them, depending on your own levels of fear and confidence. You need to know how much fight people have in them. Someone hiding his cowardice and lack of resolve can be made to surrender with a single violent push; someone desperate who has little to lose will fight to the bitter end. The Mongols used to begin their campaigns with a battle whose only purpose was to test their opponent's strength and resolve. They would never deal with an enemy until they had gauged his morale. This set-up battle also had the benefit of revealing something of his strategy and thought.

The quality of the information you gather on your enemies is more important than the quantity. A single but crucial nugget can be the key to their destruction. When the Carthaginian general Hannibal saw that the Roman general he was facing was arrogant and hot-tempered, he would deliberately play weak, luring the man into a rash attack. Once Churchill saw that Hitler had a paranoid streak, becoming irrational at the merest hint of vulnerability, the British prime minister knew how to unhinge the German fuhrer: by feigning to attack some marginal area like the Balkans, he could make him see threats on all sides and spread out his defenses, a critical military mistake.

In 1988, Lee Atwater was a political strategist on the team of the senior George Bush, who was then in the race to become that year's Republican presidential nominee. Discovering that Bush's main rival, Senator Robert Dole, had a terrible temper that his aides had to struggle to control, Atwater devised endless stratagems to push Dole's buttons. Not only did an upset Dole look unpresidential to the American public, but an emotional and angry man rarely

thinks straight. A disturbed mind is one you can control and unbalance at will.

There are, of course, limits to how much intelligence gathering you can achieve by firsthand observation. A network of spies will extend your vision, particularly as you learn to interpret the information they bring you. An informal network is the best--a group of allies recruited over time to be your eyes and ears. Try to make friends with people at or near the source of information on your rival; one well-placed friend will yield far more than will a handful of paid spies. In Napoleon's time his intelligence network was second to none, but his best information came from friends whom he had carefully positioned in diplomatic circles around Europe.

Always look for internal spies, people in the enemy camp who are dissatisfied and have an ax to grind. Turn them to your purposes and they will give you better information than any infiltrator you sneak in from outside. Hire people the enemy has fired--they will tell you how the enemy thinks. President Bill Clinton got his best intelligence on the Republicans from his adviser Dick Morris, who had worked for them for years and knew their weaknesses, both personal and organizational. A warning: never rely on one spy, one source of information, no matter how good. You risk being played or getting slanted, one-sided information.

Many people leave a paper trail of writings, interviews, and so on that is as revealing as anything you can learn from a spy. Well before World War II, Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* supplied a blueprint of his thinking and intentions, not to mention endless clues to his psychology. His generals Erwin Rommel and Heinz Guderian also wrote about the new kind of blitzkrieg warfare they were preparing. People reveal a lot about themselves in their writing, partly intentionally--they are out to explain themselves, after all--and partly helplessly to the skilled reader-between-the-lines.

> Motive of attack. --*One attacks someone not only so as to harm him or to overpower him but perhaps only so as to learn how strong he is.*
>
> FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1844-1900

> *Last year at a great conference there was a certain man who explained his dissenting opinion and said he was resolved to kill the conference leader if it was not accepted. His motion was passed. After the procedures were over, the man said, "Their assent came quickly. I think that they are too weak and unreliable to be counselors to the master."*
>
> *HAGAKURE: THE BOOK OF THE SAMURAI*, YAMAMOTO

TSUNETOMO, 1659-1720

Finally, the enemy you are dealing with is not an inanimate object that will simply respond in an expected manner to your strategies. Your enemies are constantly changing and adapting to what you are doing. Innovating and inventing on their own, they try to learn from their mistakes and from your successes. So your knowledge of the enemy cannot be static. Keep your intelligence up to date, and do not rely on the enemy's responding the same way twice. Defeat is a stern teacher, and your beaten opponent today may be wiser tomorrow. Your strategies must take this possibility into account; your knowledge of the enemy must be not just deep but timely.

Colonel John Cremony commented on their adeptness at seeming to "disappear" when he wrote "an Apache can conceal his swart body amidst the green grass, behind brown shrubs, or gray rocks, with so much address and judgement that any but the experienced would pass him by without detection at the distance of three or four yard" and noted that "they will watch for days, scanning your every movement, observing your every act; taking exact note of your party and all its belongings. Let no one suppose that these assaults are made upon the spur of the moment by bands accidentally encountered. Far from it; they are almost invariably the results of long watching--patient waiting--careful and rigorous observation, and anxious counsel."

WARRIORS: WARFARE AND THE NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN,
NORMAN BANCROFT-HUNT, 1995

Image: The Shadow. Everyone has a shadow, a secret self, a dark side. This shadow comprises everything people try to hide from the world--their weaknesses, secret desires, selfish intentions. This shadow is invisible from a distance; to see it you must get up close, physically and most of all psychologically. Then it will come into relief. Follow close in your target's footsteps and he will not notice how much of his shadow he has revealed.

Authority: Thus the reason the farsighted ruler and his superior commander conquer the enemy at every move, and achieve successes far beyond the reach of the common crowd, is advance knowledge. Such knowledge cannot be had from ghosts and spirits, educed by comparison with past events, or verified by astrological calculations. It must come from people—people who know the enemy's situation. —*Sun-tzu (fourth century B.C.)*

REVERSAL

Even as you work to know your enemies, you must make yourself as formless and difficult to read as possible. Since people really only have appearances to go on, they can be readily deceived. Act unpredictably now and then. Throw them some golden nugget of your inner self--something fabricated that has nothing to do with who you really are. Be aware that they are scrutinizing you, and either give them nothing or feed them misinformation. Keeping yourself formless and inscrutable will make it impossible for people to defend themselves against you and render the intelligence they gather on you useless.

> *In principle, I should lay it down that the existence of secret agents should not be tolerated, as tending to augment the positive dangers of the evil against which they are used. That the spy will fabricate his information is a commonplace. But in the sphere of political and revolutionary action, relying partly on violence, the professional spy has every facility to fabricate the very facts themselves, and will spread the double evil of emulation in one direction, and of panic, hasty legislation, unreflecting hate, on the other.*
>
> *THE SECRET AGENT*, JOSEPH CONRAD, 1857-1924