

# HIT THEM WHERE IT HURTS

## THE CENTER-OF-GRAVITY STRATEGY

*Everyone has a source of power on which he or she depends. When you look at your rivals, search below the surface for that source, the center of gravity that holds the entire structure together. That center can be their wealth, their popularity, a key position, a winning strategy. Hitting them there will inflict disproportionate pain. Find what the other side most cherishes and protects--that is where you must strike.*

*Man depends on his throat for fluent breathing and the maintenance of life. When his throat is strangled, his five sense organs will lose their sensibility and no longer function normally. He will not be able to stretch his limbs, which become numb and paralyzed. The man can therefore rarely survive. Thus, when the banners of the enemy come into sight and the beating of its battle drums can be heard, we must first ascertain the positions of its back and throat. Then we can attack it from the back and strangle its throat. This is an excellent strategy to crush the enemy.*

*THE WILES OF WAR: 36 MILITARY STRATEGIES FROM ANCIENT CHINA, TRANSLATED BY SUN HAICHEN, 1991*

## PILLARS OF COLLAPSE

In 210 B.C. a young Roman general named Publius Scipio the Younger (later called Scipio Africanus) was sent to northeastern Spain with a simple mission: to hold the Ebro River against the powerful Carthaginian armies that were threatening to cross it and take control of the peninsula. This was Scipio's first assignment as commander, and as he looked out on the river and plotted his strategy, he felt a strange mix of emotions.

Eight years earlier the great Carthaginian commander Hannibal had crossed this river heading north. Onward he had gone into Gaul and then, catching the Romans by surprise, had crossed the Alps into Italy. Scipio, only eighteen at the time, had fought alongside his father, a general, in the first battles against Hannibal on Italian soil. He had seen the North African's battlefield skills with his own eyes: Hannibal had maneuvered his small army brilliantly, made maximum use of his superior cavalry, and through inexhaustible creativity had

constantly managed to surprise the Romans and inflict on them a series of humiliating defeats, culminating in the virtual annihilation of the Roman legions at the Battle of Cannae in 216 B.C. Matching wits with Hannibal, Scipio knew, was futile. It had seemed back then that Rome itself was doomed.

Scipio also recalled two events after Cannae that had had an overwhelming effect on him. First, a Roman general named Fabius had finally conceived a strategy to keep Hannibal at bay. Keeping his legions in the hills and avoiding direct battle, Fabius had launched hit-and-run raids designed to wear down the Carthaginians, who were fighting far from their home, in what is now Tunisia. The campaign had worked as a holding action, but to Scipio it had seemed equally exhausting for the Romans to fight so long and still have the enemy at their doorstep. Also, since the plan could not lead to any real defeat of Hannibal, it was basically flawed.

Second, a year into Hannibal's invasion, the Romans had sent Scipio's father to Spain to try to knock out the Carthaginian bases there. Carthage had had colonies in Spain for many years and earned wealth from Spanish mines. It used Spain as a training ground for its soldiers and as the base for its war on Rome. For six years Scipio's father had fought the Carthaginians on the Spanish peninsula, but the campaign had ended in his defeat and death in 211 B.C.

As Scipio studied the reports coming in about the situation beyond the Ebro, a plan took root in his mind: with one bold maneuver, he could avenge his father's death the year before, demonstrate the effectiveness of a strategy he thought far better than Fabius's, and set in motion the eventual collapse not just of Hannibal but of Carthage itself. Along the coast to the south of him was the city of New Carthage (present-day Cartagena), the Carthaginians' capital in Spain. There they stored their vast wealth, their army's supplies, and the hostages they had taken from different Spanish tribes to be held as ransom in case of rebellion. At this moment the Carthaginian armies--which outnumbered the Romans two to one--were scattered about the country, trying to gain further domination over the Spanish tribes, and were all several days' march from New Carthage. Their commanders, Scipio learned, had been quarreling among themselves over power and money. Meanwhile New Carthage was garrisoned with only 1,000 men.

*The third shogun Iemitsu was fond of sword matches. Once, when he arranged to see some of his outstanding swordsmen display their skills, he spotted among the gathering a master equestrian by the name of Suwa Bunkuro, and impulsively asked him to take part. Bunkuro responded by saying that he would be pleased to if he could fight on horseback, adding that*

*he could defeat anyone on horseback. Iemitsu was delighted to urge the swordsmen to fight Bunkuro in the style he preferred. As it turned out, Bunkuro was right in his boasting. Brandishing a sword on a prancing horse wasn't something many swordsmen were used to, and Bunkuro easily defeated everyone who dared face him on horseback. Somewhat exasperated, Iemitsu told Munenori to give it a try. Though a bystander on this occasion, Munenori at once complied and mounted a horse. As his horse trotted up to Bunkuro's, Munenori suddenly stopped his horse and slapped the nose of Bunkuro's horse with his wooden sword. Bunkuro's horse reared, and while the famed equestrian was trying to restore his balance, Munenori struck him off his horse.*

*THE SWORD AND THE MIND, TRANSLATED BY HIROAKI SATO, 1985*

Disobeying his orders to take his stand at the Ebro, Scipio advanced south by ship and led a daring raid on New Carthage. This walled city was considered impregnable, but he timed his attack for the ebbing of the tide in a lagoon on the city's north side; there his men were able to scale the walls relatively easily, and New Carthage was taken. In one move, Scipio had produced a dramatic turnaround. Now the Romans commanded the central position in Spain; they had the money and supplies on which the Carthaginians in Spain depended; and they had Carthage's hostages, whom they now could use to stir revolt among the conquered tribes. Over the next few years, Scipio exploited this position and slowly brought Spain under Roman control.

In 205 B.C., Scipio returned to Rome a hero--but Hannibal was still a menace in Italy's interior. Scipio now wanted to take the war to Africa, by marching on Carthage itself. That was the only way to get Hannibal out of Italy and finally erase Carthage as a threat. But Fabius was still the commander in charge of Rome's strategy, and few saw the point of fighting Hannibal by waging war so far from him, and from Rome. Yet Scipio's prestige was high, and the Roman Senate finally gave him an army--a small, low-quality army--to use for his campaign.

Wasting no time on arguing his case, Scipio proceeded to make an alliance with Masinissa, king of the Massyles, Carthage's neighbors. Masinissa would supply him with a large and well-trained cavalry. Then, in the spring of 204 B.C., Scipio sailed for Africa and landed near Utica, not far from Carthage. Initially surprised, the Carthaginians rallied and were able to pin Scipio's troops on a peninsula outside the town. The situation looked bleak. If Scipio could somehow advance past the enemy troops that blocked his path, he would enter the heart of the enemy state and gain control of the situation, but that seemed an

impossible task--he could not hope to fight his way past the tight Carthaginian cordon; trapped where he was, his supplies would eventually run out, forcing him to surrender. Scipio bargained for peace but used the negotiations as a way to spy on the Carthaginian army.

Scipio's ambassadors told him that the enemy had two camps, one for its own army and the other for its main ally, the Numidians, whose camp was rather disorganized, a swarm of reed huts. The Carthaginian camp was more orderly but made of the same combustible materials. Over the next few weeks, Scipio seemed indecisive, first breaking off negotiations, then reopening them, confusing the Carthaginians. Then one night he made a sneak attack on the Numidian camp and set it on fire. The blaze spread quickly, and the African soldiers panicked, scattering in every direction. Awakened by the hubbub, the Carthaginians opened the gates to their own camp to come to their allies' rescue--but in the confusion the Romans were able to steal in and set fire to their camp as well. The enemy lost half their army in this battle by night, the rest managing to retreat to Numidia and Carthage.

*Heracles did not return to Mycenae by a direct route. He first traversed Libya, whose King Antaeus, son of Poseidon and Mother Earth, was in the habit of forcing strangers to wrestle with him until they were exhausted, whereupon he killed them; for not only was he a strong and skilful athlete, but whenever he touched the earth, his strength revived. He saved the skulls of his victims to roof a temple of Poseidon. It is not known whether Heracles, who was determined to end this barbarous practice, challenged Antaeus, or was challenged by him. Antaeus, however, proved no easy victim, being a giant who lived in a cave beneath a towering cliff, where he feasted on the flesh of lions, and slept on the bare ground in order to conserve and increase his already colossal strength. Mother Earth, not yet sterile after her birth of the Giant, had conceived Antaeus in a Libyan cave, and found more reason to boast of him than even of her monstrous elder children, Typhon, Tityus, and Briareus. It would have gone ill with the Olympians if he had fought against them on the Plains of Phlegra. In preparation for the wrestling match, both combatants cast off their lion pelts, but while Heracles rubbed himself with oil in the Olympian fashion, Antaeus poured hot sand over his limbs lest contact with the earth through the soles of his feet alone should prove insufficient. Heracles planned to preserve his strength and wear Antaeus down, but after tossing him full length on the ground, he was amazed to see the giant's muscles swell and a healthy flush suffuse his limbs as Mother Earth revived him. The combatants grappled again, and presently Antaeus*

*flung himself down of his own accord, not waiting to be thrown; upon which, Heracles, realizing what he was at, lifted him high into the air, then cracked his ribs and, despite the hollow groans of Mother Earth, held him aloft until he died.*

*THE GREEK MYTHS, VOL. 2, ROBERT GRAVES, 1955*

Suddenly the Carthaginian interior lay open to Scipio's army. He proceeded to take town after town, advancing much as Hannibal had in Italy. Then he landed a contingent of troops at the port of Tunis, within sight of Carthage's walls. Now it was the Carthaginians' turn to panic, and Hannibal, their greatest general, was immediately recalled. In 202 B.C., after sixteen years of fighting on Rome's doorstep, Hannibal was finally compelled to leave Italy.

Hannibal landed his army to Carthage's south and made plans to fight Scipio. But the Roman general retreated west, to the Bagradas Valley--the most fertile farmlands of Carthage, its economic base. There he went on a rampage, destroying everything in sight. Hannibal had wanted to fight near Carthage, where he had shelter and material reinforcements. Instead he was compelled to pursue Scipio before Carthage lost its richest territory. But Scipio kept retreating, refusing battle until he had lured Hannibal to the town of Zama, where he secured a solid position and forced Hannibal to camp in a place without water. Now the two armies finally met in battle. Exhausted by their pursuit of Scipio, their cavalry neutralized by Masinissa's, the Carthaginians were defeated, and with no refuge close enough to retreat to, Hannibal was forced to surrender. Carthage quickly sued for peace, and under the harsh terms imposed by Scipio and the Senate, it was reduced to a client state of Rome. As a Mediterranean power and a threat to Rome, Carthage was finished for good.

### **Interpretation**

Often what separates a mediocre general from a superior one is not their strategies or maneuvers but their vision--they simply look at the same problem from a different angle. Freed from the stranglehold of convention, the superior general naturally hits on the right strategy.

The Romans were dazzled by Hannibal's strategic genius. They came to so fear him that the only strategies they could use against him were delay and avoidance. Scipio Africanus simply saw differently. At every turn he looked not at the enemy army, nor even at its leader, but at the pillar of support on which it stood--its critical vulnerability. He understood that military power was located not in the army itself but in its foundations, the things that supported it and made it possible: money, supplies, public goodwill, allies. He found those pillars and

bit by bit knocked them down.

Scipio's first step was to see Spain, not Italy, as Hannibal's center of gravity. Within Spain the key was New Carthage. He did not chase the various Roman armies but took New Carthage and turned the war around. Now Hannibal, deprived of his main military base and source of supply, would have to lean more heavily on his other support base: Carthage itself, with its wealth and resources. So Scipio took the war to Africa. Trapped near Utica, he examined what gave the enemy its power in this situation, and saw that it was not the armies themselves but the position they had taken: get them to move out of that position without wasting men in a frontal battle and Carthage's soft underbelly would be exposed. By burning the camps, Scipio moved the armies. Then, instead of marching on the city of Carthage--a glittering prize that would have drawn most generals like a magnet--he hit what would hurt the Carthaginian state most: the fertile farming zone that was the source of its wealth. Finally, instead of chasing Hannibal, he made Hannibal come after him, to an area in the middle of the country where he would be deprived of reinforcements and support. Now that Scipio had unbalanced the Carthaginians so completely, their defeat at Zama was definitive.

Power is deceptive. If we imagine the enemy as a boxer, we tend to focus on his punch. But still more than he depends on his punch, he depends on his legs; once they go weak, he loses balance, he cannot escape the other fighter, he is subject to grueling exchanges, and his punches gradually diminish in force until he is knocked out. When you look at your rivals, do not be distracted by their punch. To engage in any exchange of punches, in life or in war, is the height of stupidity and waste. Power depends on balance and support; so look at what is holding your enemy up, and remember that what holds him up can also make him fall. A person, like an army, usually gets his or her power from three or four simultaneous sources: money, popularity, skillful maneuvering, some particular advantage he has fostered. Knock out one and he will have to depend more on the others; knock out those and he is lost. Weaken a boxer's legs and he will reel and stagger, and when he does, be merciless. No power can stand without its legs.

*When the vanes are removed from an arrow, even though the shaft and tip remain it is difficult for the arrow to penetrate deeply.*

*--Ming dynasty strategist Chieh Hsuan (early seventeenth century A.D.)*

## **KEYS TO WARFARE**

It is natural in war to focus on the physical aspect of conflict--bodies, equipment,

materiel. Even an enlightened strategist will tend to look first at the enemy's army, firepower, mobility, reserves. War is a visceral, emotional affair, an arena of physical danger, and it takes great effort to rise above this level and ask different questions: What makes the enemy army move? What gives it impetus and endurance? Who guides its actions? What is the underlying source of its strength?

*The people of Israel cried out to the Lord their God, for their courage failed, because all their enemies had surrounded them and there was no way of escape from them. The whole Assyrian army, their infantry, chariots, and cavalry, surrounded them for thirty-four days, until all the vessels of water belonging to every inhabitant of Bethulia were empty.... Their children lost heart, and the women and young men fainted from thirst and fell down in the streets of the city and in the passages through the gates; there was no strength left in them any longer.... When Judith had ceased crying out to the God of Israel, and had ended all these words, she rose from where she lay prostrate and called her maid and went down into the house where she lived on sabbaths and on her feast days; and she removed the sackcloth which she had been wearing, and took off her widow's garments, and bathed her body with water, and anointed herself with precious ointment, and combed her hair and put on a tiara, and arrayed herself in her gayest apparel, which she used to wear while her husband Manasseh was living. And she put sandals on her feet, and put on her anklets and bracelets and rings, and her earrings and all her ornaments, and made herself very beautiful, to entice the eyes of all men who might see her..... The women went straight on through the valley; and an Assyrian patrol met her and took her into custody, and asked her, "To what people do you belong, and where are you going?" She replied, "I am a daughter of the Hebrews, but I am fleeing from them, for they are about to be handed over to you to be devoured. I am on my way to the presence of Holofernes the commander of your army, to give him a true report; and I will show him a way by which he can go and capture all the hill country without losing one of his men, captured or slain." When the man heard her words, and observed her face--she was in their eyes marvelously beautiful--they said to her "...Go at once to his tent.... And when you stand before him, do not be afraid in your heart, but tell him just what you have said, and he will treat you well."...Her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants, and they marveled at her wisdom and said, "There is no such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, either for beauty of face or wisdom of speech!"...On the fourth day Holofernes held a banquet for his slaves only, and did not invite*

any of his officers. And he said to Bagoas, the eunuch who had charge of all his personal affairs, "Go now and persuade the Hebrew woman who is in your care to join us and eat and drink with us."...So Bagoas went out from the presence of Holofernes, and approached her...And Judith said, "Who am I, to refuse my lord? Surely whatever pleases him I will do at once, and it will be a joy to me until the day of my death!" So she got up and arrayed herself in all her woman's finery. Then Judith came in and lay down, and Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and he was moved with great desire to possess her; for he had been waiting for an opportunity to deceive her, ever since the day he first saw her. So Holofernes said to her, "Drink now, and be merry with us!" Judith said, "I will drink now, my lord, because my life means more to me today than in all the days since I was born."...And Holofernes was greatly pleased with her, and drank a great quantity of wine, much more than he had ever drunk in any one day since he was born. When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew, and Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence; and they went to bed.... So Judith was left alone in the tent, with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was overcome with wine.... [Judith] went to the post at the end of the bed, above Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there. She came close to his bed and took hold of the hair on his head.... And she struck his neck twice with all her might and severed his head from his body. Then she tumbled his body off the bed and pulled the canopy from the posts; after a moment she went out, and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, who placed it in her food bag.... So Bagoas...went into the bedchamber and found him thrown down on the platform dead, with his head cut off and missing. And he cried out with a loud voice and wept and groaned.... Then he went to the tent where Judith had stayed, and when he did not find her he rushed out to the people and shouted, "The slaves have tricked us! One Hebrew woman has brought disgrace upon the house of Nebuchadnezzar! For look, here is Holofernes lying on the ground, and his head is not on him!" When the leaders of the Assyrian army heard this, they rent their tunics and were greatly dismayed, and their loud cries and shouts arose in the midst of the camp.... When the men in the tents heard it, they were amazed at what had happened. Fear and trembling came over them, so that they did not wait for one another, but with one impulse all rushed out and fled by every path across the plain and through the country.... Then the men of Israel, every one that was a soldier, rushed out upon them.... And when the Israelites heard it, with one accord they fell upon the enemy, and cut them down as far as Choba.



Most people have the problem of seeing war as a separate activity unrelated to other realms of human life. But in fact war is a form of power--Carl von Clausewitz called it "politics by other means"--and all forms of power share the same essential structures.

The most visible thing about power is its outward manifestation, what its witnesses see and feel. An army has its size, its weaponry, its shows of discipline, its aggressive maneuvers; individuals have many ways of showing their position and influence. It is the nature of power to present a forceful front, to seem menacing and intimidating, strong and decisive. But this outward display is often exaggerated or even downright deceptive, since power does not dare show its weaknesses. And beneath the display is the support on which power rests--its "center of gravity." The phrase is von Clausewitz's, who elaborated it as "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends." This is the part that governs the whole, a kind of nerve center.

To attack this center of gravity, to neutralize or destroy it, is the ultimate strategy in war, for without it the whole structure will collapse. The enemy may have great generals and strong armies, like Hannibal and his invincible army in Italy, but without a center of gravity those armies cannot move and have no force or coherence. Hitting the center will have devastating psychological effects, throwing the enemy off balance and inducing a creeping panic. If conventional generals look at the physical aspect of the enemy army, focusing on its weaknesses and trying to exploit them, superior strategists look behind and beyond, to the support system. The enemy's center of gravity is where an injury will hurt him most, his point of greatest vulnerability. Hitting him there is the best way to end a conflict definitively and economically.

The key is analyzing the enemy force to determine its centers of gravity. In looking for those centers, it is crucial not to be misled by the intimidating or dazzling exterior, mistaking the outward appearance for what sets it in motion. You will probably have to take several steps, one by one, to uncover this ultimate power source, peeling away layer after layer. Remember Scipio, who saw first that Hannibal depended on Spain, then that Spain depended on Carthage, then that Carthage depended on its material prosperity, which itself had particular sources. Strike at Carthage's prosperity, as Scipio eventually did, and the whole thing would fall apart.

To find a group's center of gravity, you must understand its structure and the culture within which it operates. If your enemies are individuals, you must fathom their psychology, what makes them tick, the structure of their thinking

and priorities.

In crafting a strategy to defeat the United States in the Vietnam War, General Vo Nguyen Giap determined that the real center of gravity in the American democracy was the political support of its citizens. Given that support--the kind of support the military had had during World War II--the country could prosecute a war with the utmost effectiveness. Without that support, though, the effort was doomed. Through the Tet Offensive of 1968, Giap was able to undermine the American public's support for the war. He had gained an understanding of American culture that allowed him to aim at the right target.

The more centralized the enemy, the more devastating becomes a blow at its leader or governing body. Hernan Cortes was able to conquer Mexico with a handful of soldiers by capturing Moctezuma, the Aztec emperor. Moctezuma was the center around which everything revolved; without him Aztec culture quickly collapsed. When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, he assumed that by taking Moscow, the capital, he could force the Russians to surrender. But the true center of gravity in this authoritarian nation was the czar, who was determined to continue the war. The loss of Moscow only steeled his resolve.

A more decentralized enemy will have several separate centers of gravity. The key here is to disorganize them by cutting off communication between them. That was what General Douglas MacArthur did in his remarkable campaign in the Pacific during World War II: he skipped some islands but took key ones, keeping the Japanese extended over a vast area and making it impossible for them to communicate with each other. It is almost always strategically wise to disrupt your enemy's lines of communication; if the parts cannot communicate with the whole, chaos ensues.

Your enemy's center of gravity can be something abstract, like a quality, concept, or aptitude on which he depends: his reputation, his capacity to deceive, his unpredictability. But such strengths become critical vulnerabilities if you can make them unattractive or unusable. In fighting the Scythians in what is now modern-day Iran, a tribe that no one could figure out how to defeat, Alexander the Great saw the center of gravity as their complete mobility on horseback and their fluid, almost chaotic style of fighting. He simply plotted to neutralize the source of this power by luring them on to enclosed ground in which they could not use their cavalry and pell-mell tactics. He defeated them with ease.

To find an enemy's center of gravity, you have to erase your own tendency to think in conventional terms or to assume that the other side's center is the same as your own. When Salvador Dali came to the United States in 1940, intent on conquering the country as an artist and making his fortune, he made a clever calculation. In the European art world, an artist had to win over the critics and

make a name as "serious." In America, though, that kind of fame would doom an artist to a ghetto, a limited circle. The real center of gravity was the American media. By wooing the newspapers, he would gain access to the American public, and the American public would make him a star.

Again, in the civil war between Communists and Nationalists for control of China in the late 1920s and early '30s, most of the Communists focused on taking cities, as the Bolsheviks had done in Russia. But Mao Tse-tung, an outsider within the dogmatic Chinese Communist Party, was able to look at China in a clear light and see China's center of gravity as its vast peasant population. Win them to his side, he believed, and the revolution could not fail. That single insight proved the key to the Communists' success. Such is the power of identifying the center of gravity.

We often hide our sources of power from view; what most people consider a center of gravity is often a front. But sometimes an enemy will reveal his center of gravity by what he protects the most fervently. In bringing the Civil War into Georgia, General William Tecumseh Sherman discovered that the South was particularly anxious to protect Atlanta and the areas around it. That was the South's industrial center of gravity. Like Sherman, attack what the enemy most treasures, or threaten it to make the enemy divert forces to defend itself.

In any group, power and influence will naturally devolve to a handful of people behind the scenes. That kind of power works best when it is not exposed to the light of day. Once you discover this coterie holding the strings, win it over. As president during the Depression, Franklin Roosevelt faced problems from so many sides that it was difficult for him to know where his energy should go. In the end he decided that the key to enacting his reforms was winning over Congress. Then, within Congress, there were particular leaders who held the real power. He concentrated on wooing and seducing these leaders with his great charm. It was one of the secrets to his success.

What ultimately guides a group is the command-and-control center, the operational brain that takes in information, then makes the crucial decisions. Disrupting the functioning of that brain will cause dislocation throughout the enemy army. Before almost every battle, Alexander the Great would examine the enemy's organization, pinpointing as best he could the location of the command structure, then either attacking it or isolating it, making it impossible for the brain to communicate with the body.

Even in a sport as physical as boxing, Muhammad Ali, in crafting a strategy to defeat his archnemesis Joe Frazier, took aim at Frazier's mind, the ultimate center of gravity for any individual. Before every fight, Ali would get under Frazier's skin, riling him up by calling him an Uncle Tom, a tool of the white

man's media. He would keep going during the fight itself, taunting Frazier mercilessly in the ring. Frazier became obsessed with Ali, could not think about him without bursting with anger. Controlling Frazier's mind was the key to controlling his body.

In any interaction with people, you must train yourself to focus on their strength, the source of their power, whatever it is that gives them their most crucial support. That knowledge will afford you many strategic options, many angles from which to attack, subtly or not so subtly undermining their strength rather than hitting it head-on. You can create no greater sense of panic in your enemies than that of being unable to use their strengths.

## REVERSAL

Every living creature has a center of gravity. Even the most decentralized group has to communicate and depends on a network that is vulnerable to attack. There is no reversal to this principle.

**Image: The Wall. Your opponents stand behind a wall, which protects them from strangers and intruders. Do not hit your head against the wall or lay siege to it; find the pillars and supports that make it stand and give it strength. Dig under the wall, sapping its foundations until it collapses on its own.**

**Authority:** The first principle is that the ultimate substance of enemy strength must be traced back to the fewest possible sources, and ideally to one alone. The attack on these sources must be compressed into the fewest possible actions. . . . By constantly seeking out the center of his power, by daring all to win all, will one really defeat the enemy.

—Carl von Clausewitz,  
On War (1780–  
1831)