



STRATEGIC ATTACK AND WARFIGHTING STRATEGY

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[Strategic attack](#) represents one key element of a unified national approach to handling a conflict and should not be employed in isolation. A sound, unified approach will comprise [diplomatic, informational, military, and economic](#) activities orchestrated carefully to achieve national security objectives. It is most effectively used in a manner that complements and is complemented by other operations. For example, action against an enemy's forces may expose critical targets and increase their consumption of war-sustaining resources. Such operations may also be necessary to enable strategic attack, as the defeat of the Luftwaffe through [offensive counterair](#) operations did during World War II. Certain coercive applications of SA simply may not work in the absence of complementary diplomatic, political, or economic actions.

Regardless of these considerations, the US can pursue a comprehensive [strategy designed](#) to place maximum stress on the enemy system (nation or organization). The process of developing this strategy should start with the desired end state and then be worked backwards from big to little, [strategic to tactical](#). The enemy should be analyzed as a system and an effects-based approach should be used to determine required effects and actions. Striking an enemy's [centers of gravity](#) should be accomplished as quickly and from as many directions and sources as possible, in order to place overwhelming strain on the system.

Victory in any conflict requires some mechanism for changing the enemy's behavior. Behavior can be influenced by affecting the enemy's capability to fight or by influencing the enemy's will to fight (by [creating effects on enemy systems](#)); most situations will involve aspects of both. There are several mechanisms that can be used to implement a coercive strategy.