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Footnotes from "The Christian Character of Tolkien's Invented World"

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cavalry of Rohan, no longer held in check by Saruman, and aided by the Wild Men of the woods, arrives unexpectedly out of the forest and Sauron's army is flanked and its commander killed (III, p. 117). Quickly following upon this action, the army is again flanked from the south by Aragorn, who has defeated the southern allies expected to cover that region and to aid in the siege. The battle is lost and most of Sauron's forces are destroyed (BK 5, Ch. 6). The arrival of the Riders and Aragorn illustrates another vital principle of strategy: the essential nature of the timing of an attack. Sauron would expect moves to be preceded by a move, or moves, which can best be directed at the mind of the hostile rulers, not the bodies of their troops .... that he will not notice the true threat to his power offered by Frodo and Sam. As he says, "We must push Sauron to his last throw. We must call out his hidden strength, so that he shall empty his land. We must march out to meet him at once. We must make ourselves the bait, though his jaws should close on us. We will take that bait, in hope and greed, for he will think that in such rashness he sees the pride of the new Ringlord." (III, p. 156).

This move is a distraction, always an essential element in grand strategy. Liddell Hart defines distraction in the following terms: "Because of the risk that the enemy may achieve such a change of front, it is usually necessary for the dislocating move to be preceded by a move, or moves, which can best be defined by the term 'distract' in its literal sense of 'to divide the attention' or 'to separate the mind from the body.' The object of the move is to make the enemy of his freedom of action, and it should operate in both the physical and psychological spheres. ... 'Stonewall!' Jackson aptly expresses this in his strategical motto—'Mystify, mix, and surprise'. For to mystify and mislead constitutes 'distraction', while surprise is the essential causal 'dislocation'. It is through the distraction of the commander's mind that distraction of his forces follows. The loss of his freedom of action is the sequel to the loss of his freedom of conception" (Strategy, p. 345). Liddell Hart is concerned that Sauron's failure to distract the commander can result in disaster. He concludes with some final thoughts on the role of war in The Lord of the Rings with an increased respect for the achievement of the author. The outcome of the book is produced not by magic or simply by the author's fiat but through the natural development of the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing forces. This realist enables him to deal with the work as with a work of 'true' history. In fact, with an artist like Tolkien, perhaps there is no distinction between 'true' and "feigned" history.

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(We apologize for having left these footnotes out of Mythlore 10, where the body of the article appeared on pages 3-8. —GG)


4. Voegelin, op. cit., 126-33 and passim.

5. Tolkien on Tolkien," loc. cit., 39.

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