

RECON BY FIRE

Over the centuries, armies developed a technique for conducting reconnaissance behind enemy lines using artillery called, “Recon by Fire”. It probably reached it’s peak form and use during WW I, as after that other tools became available.

The practice was to divide the area behind enemy lines into a grid pattern, then methodically shell the grid, section by section. (Much like when you played “Battleship.”) When they saw a commotion and a bunch of smoke, they knew they had found something important, maybe a supply depot or an ammo dump. And they followed up. When they hit troop concentrations or a headquarters they might even elicit a counter-attack or some other significant response. And again they pounded the area.

Politics seems to conduct it’s warfare in a similar fashion. Sometimes the incoming ‘fire’ is intentional from the opposition, but just as often it can come from innocent bystanders, events, or even the ‘friendly-fire’ of well meaning supporters. No matter the cause, it is the response that tells the opposition what you feel you HAVE to defend. Then, you can be distracted from your ‘Game’ anytime they want. Your opposition may randomly shoot off claims and accusations as their ‘Recon by Fire’ to seek your response. They would love to be able to start hundreds of ‘false fires’ to take you away from your game. Be careful which gambits you respond to. Don’t chase every squirrel. The more time a candidate (you or the other guy) spends defending, the less time they have to campaign. (Think: Boxer on his ‘back foot.’)

You need to conduct your own ‘Recon by Fire’ operations, and be aware of any other ‘accidental’ incidents that happen to your opponent. From their response you can gauge the sensitivity of the voters on particular issues. Your job is to find those issues, topics, and subjects where your opponent is actually contrary to the voter. Once found – engage the ‘Hell’ out of them!

If your accusation doesn’t elicit a defense from your opponent, or a reaction from their supporters, drop it and move on. Try again – Find something that matters. Campaigns are almost totally conducted like a game of ‘Battleship.’ Each of you jabbing in the dark to find the sensitive spots the other has to defend. Then it’s just a game of ‘parry and thrust’ fencing. But the biggest part of the game is the ‘Recon.’ You have to find those topics and subjects that both appeal to your supporters, and that their supporters will divorce them over. Any other topics are just baggage, or decorations.

‘Saving’ your opponent is NOT your goal. You’re there to EXPOSE them and ‘Save’ their followers. Be the “Prophet’ that will lead them to the ‘still waters’ they want. First, you have to expose your opponent’s failures that matter to the voter. That takes Reconnaissance. You have to make your opponent engage with your accusations.

Winners Attack – Losers Defend! Make your incumbent defend.

You have to be constantly looking for that killer “Check-Mate” issue or topic.