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Art of War and Legalism

Primary Source Reading

"All warfare is based on deception. So, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.

To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."

That's Sun-Tzu, the Art of War.

"When a sage governs a state, he does not rely on the people to do good out of their own will. Instead, he sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is not good. If he relies on people to do good out of their own will, within the borders of the state not even 10 persons can be counted on [to do good]. Yet, if one sees to it that they are not allowed to do what is not good, the whole state can be brought to uniform order...The wisdom of the people is useless: They have the minds of little infants!"

That's Han Fei-tzu.