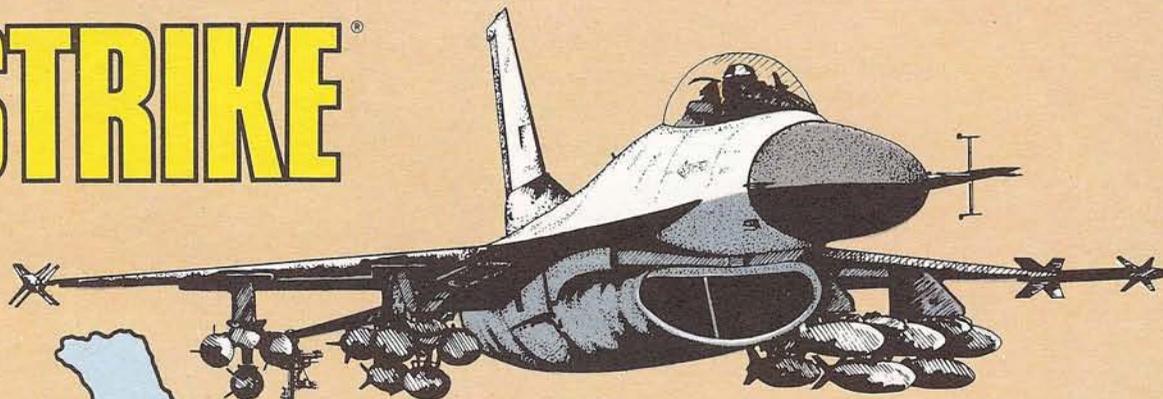


# VICTORY

INSIDER

## GULF STRIKE®



### Tactics & strategies for fighting the next war

#### INTRODUCTION

Gulf Strike is a game of combined arms warfare at the operational and strategic level. The combat elements consist of the land, air and sea forces potentially available in the volatile Persian Gulf region. The game system allows the commanders to move their eligible forces during a phase without restrictions based on unit type. This extreme level of fluidity opens up many new movement and combat combinations giving the player the full range of options open to a Theater CinC (Commander in Chief). To reflect the simultaneity of combat the non-phasing player has many reaction options available. Given a detection of an imminent attack the properly postured defender can launch interceptors to thwart the strike. This type of system emphasizes the importance of detection aircraft such as the E-2 Hawkeye which was effectively used by the Israelis during their air offensive against the Syrians over the Bekaa valley.

Gulf Strike has 5 scenarios included. Scenario 4 is for solitaire play only whereas Scenario 5 is a training scenario. The meat of the game resides in scenarios 1 through 3. In scenario 1, the Iranian forces have defeated the Iraqis and have had their ground forces revitalized with equipment from the Soviet Union. Once the Iranian forces are ready they launch a Jihad against the other Gulf

# VIETNAM

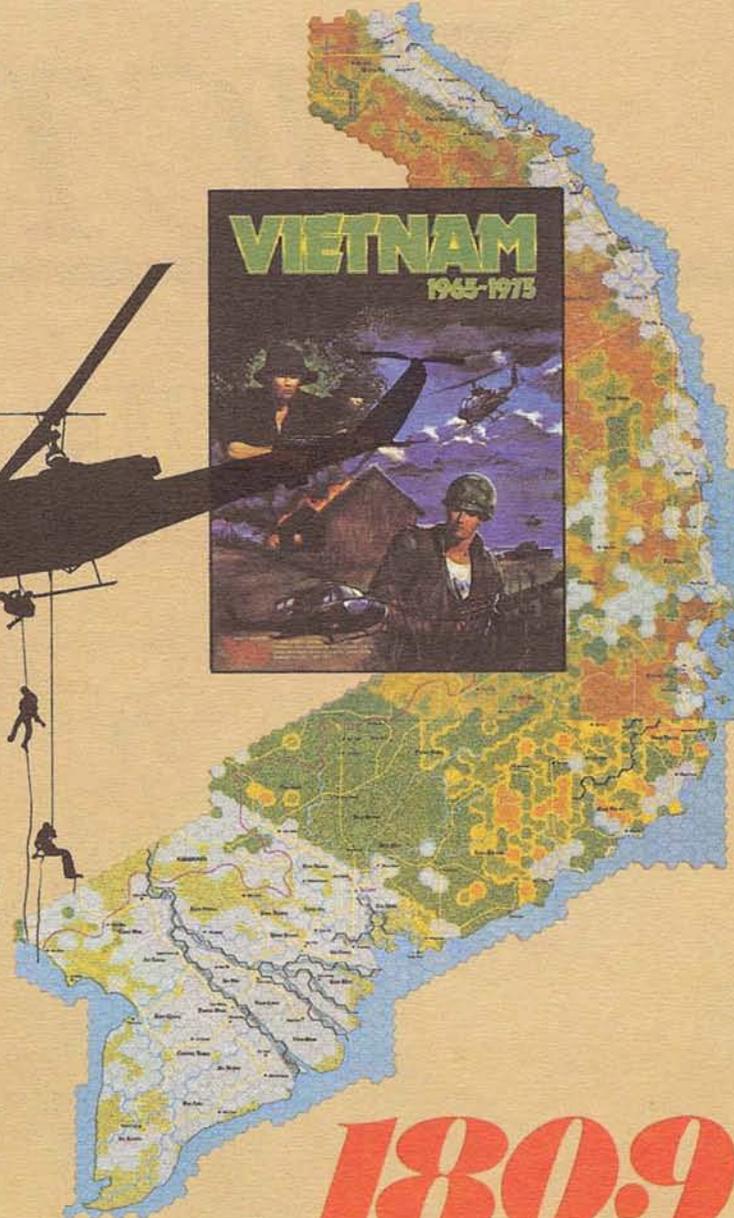
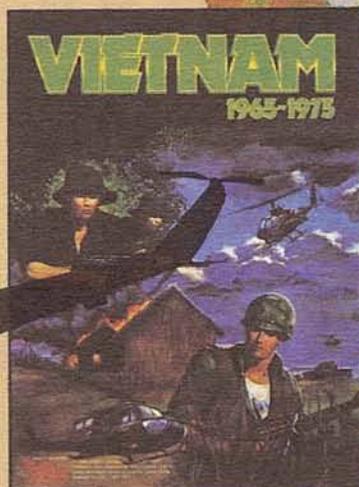
## New from Victory Games for Spring 1984!

This comprehensive multi-scenario simulation covers the conflict in all its aspects from 1965 on, with particular emphasis on operations and political control throughout the provinces. This innovative, highly detailed system features a range of scenarios that can be played in as little as three hours or for days on end. The use of battalion level units, airmobile operations, air strikes, naval gunfire, Viet Cong hidden movement, and free fire zones all contribute to the game's accurate portrayal of the years of bitter struggle.

**Components:** Rules booklet, two 22"×32" full-color mapsheets depicting all of South Vietnam and adjoining areas of Laos and Cambodia, 780 die-cut cardboard playing pieces representing all major belligerents, one six-sided die, and plastic counter storage tray.

**Complexity:** Very high. **Solitaire Suitability:** Medium. **Time Scale:** Two turns per Season. **Map Scale:** Six miles per hex. **Unit Scale:** Division/regiment/battalion. **Players:** Two. **Playing Time:** From 6 hours for a short scenario, to a hundred or more hours for an entire campaign.

#30005  
**VIETNAM**  
\$20.00



# 1809

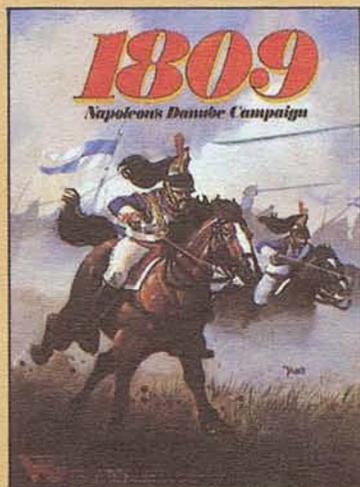
## Napoleon's Danube Campaign

An exciting subject, a sophisticated design, and an exceptionally easy to learn set of rules —1809 is a masterpiece of Napoleonic gaming. Trace the entire campaign, from Ratisbon to Wagram, or enjoy the challenge of the Essling and Wagram battle scenarios. The game includes extensive rules for leadership, command, bridging, march, and combat, as well as optional rules for hidden deployment, combat effectiveness, and fatigue.

**Components:** Rules booklet, two 22"×32" and one 22"×16" full-color mapsheets, two organization displays, 260 die-cut cardboard playing pieces representing leaders and combat units, one six-sided die, and plastic storage tray.

**Complexity:** Medium. **Solitaire Suitability:** High. **Time Scale:** Two days per turn. **Map Scale:** Three miles per hex. **Unit Scale:** Division/brigade. **Players:** Two. **Playing Time:** From 3 hours for a short scenario, to 20 or more hours for an entire campaign.

#30006  
**1809**  
\$18.00





# Thrilling

# TALES OF VICTORY

After numerous letters, phone calls and personal appeals, the Victory Games staff has decided to create and publish (with the kind assistance of The General and Heroes magazine staffers) *Victory Insider*. This type of enthusiasm has always been the inspiration which has fueled the efforts of Victory Games. The intent of this publication is to create a forum for designers and aficionados of our military simulations to elaborate on design insights, new scenarios, strategy and tactics.

It has always been my feeling that a game review which is intended to inform the reader on the basic quality and innovation of a particular game falls far short of providing player-oriented information. Even as a designer, I still feel the need to return to my roots as a game player and enjoy the intense mental stimulation which games have always provided. *Victory Insider* will fill this gap with one to two articles per issue on recently released or established games and systems.

From its inception, VG has been guided by the philosophy that each game it produces must be of the highest quality. Obviously, all companies make this statement. At VG, it translates into a concerted effort on each game to create a new and innovative system, keeping us on the leading edge of game technology. To accomplish this, the staff works together, both formally and informally, in a maximum effort to refine each product. All games in addition to being ex-

★ ★ ★

While *Victory Insider* is being published inside *The General*, it is actually put together by a different staff, and has some features that will require some introduction.

"Thrilling Tales of Victory", of course, is our version of "The Avalon Hill Philosophy". The topic will vary with the writer(s) and the style will be looser than in an article.

For errata fans, we have one of our more valuable staffers working on a column just for you. "W. Bill's Oversights" will contain the latest compilation of errors, addendum, mistakes, and typos that occasionally slip into our products.

In the future, we will also be publishing some of the more interesting letters that we receive, and we encourage you to consider submitting something to the magazine about our products. Since we are not bound into the pages of *The General*, our page count will vary from issue to issue depending upon the amount of material we receive.

**William E. Peschel/Managing Editor**

haustively tested with the public and distant "blind testers" are internally scrutinized and reviewed by all members of the staff to achieve maximum input. This type of game design organization has created a situation whereby the talents of the whole staff are greater than the sum of its individual parts. We have to date found great success with this process, if the feedback cards and buyer comments are any measure.

I want to personally thank all those who took the time to respond by sending in their Feedback cards. It is through this type of input that VG understands both your feelings about the games and the type of products you want to see in the future. I want to stress to all those that have not sent in cards that you are denying yourself a powerful medium for influencing future decisions at Victory Games.

To give the readership of *Victory Insider* a more rounded view of the staff, the authorship of this column will rotate among the various designers, editors and artists (yes, artists) on the staff. It is my desire that this exchange of views will enhance the enjoyment which we strive to bring to our audience. If anyone has any comments that will not fit on the feedback card, please feel free to drop us a letter. I promise that all responses are read, but cannot be answered. Thank you for your continuing patronage and hobby enthusiasm.

**Mark Herman/Director**

*Victory Insider* is devoted to printing articles about the products of Victory Games, Inc.

All editorial and general mail should be sent to The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD 21214. Subscriptions to *The General* are \$9.00 for one year; \$14.00 for two years. Address changes must be submitted at least 6 weeks in advance to guarantee proper delivery. Paid advertising is not accepted.

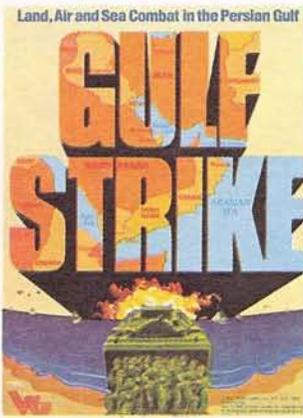
Articles from the public will be considered for publication at the discretion of our Executive Editor. Articles should be typewritten, double-spaced, and written in English. There is no limit to word length. Rejected articles will be returned if submitted with a stamped-self addressed envelope.

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countries in retaliation for their support of Iraq during the war. Both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. eventually send forces into the conflict.



Scenario 2 and 3 postulates that the Soviet Union invades Iran for supporting the Afgani rebels and to gain certain strategic objectives (ie. control of the oil fields). The U.S. sends its forces to thwart these objectives. The difference between the two scenarios is that in the latter the Iran/Iraq war is still in progress.

This article will examine the various strategies available to both sides during the opening, middle and end game play in scenarios 1 through 3 and a discussion of operational tactics for the different combat units. The Opening and Middle game Super-

power sections that follow apply primarily to scenarios 2 and 3 whereas scenario 1 is covered under the Arab forces section in greater detail. The section on Superpower End Game Strategy applies to scenarios 1 through 3, for at this point the basic strategies are similar. Clearly other scenarios are possible and the players are encouraged to invent their own.

### **SUPERPOWER STRATEGY—THE OPENING SALVOS (Scenarios 2 and 3)**

The major emphasis for the superpowers during the opening game is at the strategic level. In these scenarios both of the superpowers have the same types of problems. Their forces need to be moved into the operational map area in strength with the Straits of Hormoz having significant value to both sides.

The major objectives for the U.S. commander are to preserve the forces that are already in theater and to maintain an area where the reinforcements can arrive without being molested by enemy forces. This requires that Diego Garcia the major U.S. base in the area be adequately defended. A good strategy is to send one of the F-14's from CV-63 (USS Kitty Hawk) to the island to augment the F-15 squadron and move the carrier southeast of the island to keep it out of Tu-26 (Backfire) range. While the U.S. reinforcements are arriving use the P-3 stationed on Diego Garcia and the S-3 from the carrier to conduct anti-submarine operations against Soviet submarines in the theater. Any submarines destroyed early will benefit the U.S. position when the Middle game begins.

The U.S. land and air reinforcements should be based on the mainland as soon as possible. The first forces to arrive will be the brigade of the 82nd airborne division and a wing (3 squadrons) of F-15's. These units should be deployed to a secure site to begin the build-up of US forces in theater. The F-15's should be mainly concerned with maintaining an air defense zone over the U.S. buildup site. Later in the game this will be the place from which the counter-offensive will originate from and long range planning should take this fact into account when choosing the site. Use the U.S. B-52's initially to conduct strikes against Soviet Airbase units in order to restrict the locations from which Backfire aircraft can be launched. It should be noted that the high ECM rating of the B-52's represents the ability of these aircraft to jam the detection capability of interceptors and ground radars in addition to jamming missiles. If the U.S. commander under these conditions can neutralize the Backfire and submarine threat while maintaining the buildup of forces in the theater the opening game will have been decided in his favor.

Whereas the U.S. commander requires success during the Opening game to insure any chance of victory the Soviet commander can win the game in the Opening by denying the U.S. sea supremacy. Therefore it is incumbent on the Soviet commander to maintain his surface fleet "in being", as opposed to seeking surface engagements with the U.S. surface units. A good place to do this is under the Mig-23 air umbrella in a South Yemen coastal hex where the land based air units will help protect the fleet. In addition, by placing submarines to screen the surface fleet the threat from U.S. submarines is reduced. Maintaining the integrity of this position in South Yemen will compound the U.S. supply line problems as a sortie from the flank of the SLOC (Sea Line of Communication) is possible at any

time, assuming that naval units have survived. (Figure 1)

Mines can effectively block U.S. supply lines prior to the movement of the U.S. Supply Head to the mainland if certain key coastal hexes are targeted. These mines should be delivered by air and submarine. Since the U.S. mine clearing capability is resident in their SH-3 helicopters the only way these hexes can be cleared is by moving the carriers close in making them vulnerable to Backfire attack.

Above all else, if the U.S. commander gives the Soviets the opportunity, the carriers should be attacked whenever an opening presents itself. The best units to accomplish this with are the SSGN's and Backfires (Tu-26). See the section on Tactics: Naval Operations.

The Arab naval forces in the game do not play a major role at the strategic level but do have an impact on the operational naval situation in the Persian Gulf. Each side should use the forces of their Arab allies to neutralize the other side's naval and air forces in order to gain an advantage for the middle game.

The Soviet commander in scenarios 2 and 3 has a preponderance of land forces at his disposal. Early in the campaign several axis of advance should be decided upon and exploited with the resources available. Do not try to advance across the entire front. The ability to protect the Lines of Communication (supply lines) with ground based air defense units is limited. In the beginning most cities that are defended should be bypassed, allowing spearhead units to penetrate as far south as possible. The earlier this is accomplished the better the ground position will be during the middle game when U.S. air power will begin to slow the advance. During the late middle game and end game play these bypassed cities can be reduced with the later Soviet ground reinforcements.

There are four primary north-south axis of advance. Each of these attack routes has a defined objective and will be characterized in this narrative by the major cities it encompasses. Starting in the west is the most direct approach to the Iranian oilfields (2 victory cities) in Megahex F-06. The route is Tabriz, Kermanshah, and Ahvaz/Abadan or Tabriz, Hamadan, Arak, and Ahvaz/Abadan. The major disadvantage of this axis concerns the mountainous terrain that must be transited to enter Megahex F-06 (Khuzistan). In scenario 3, when the Iraqi forces are active the Soviet commander should leave the capture of this southern objective to the Iraqis and concentrate these assets on another advance route. When playing scenario 2, a well timed airborne drop can open things up if the spearhead units get bogged down in the mountains.

The western Caspian sea route moves along the coastal highway to Rasht/Qazyin, Tehran, Qom, Kashan, Esfahan, and Bandar Abbas. This axis of advance should be one of the more heavily defended and will usually require bypassing several infantry garrisons early in the scenario. The primary objective of this pincer is Esfahan where a link up with the eastern Caspian pincer should be affected. The eastern Caspian advance route moves down the coast and then to Tehran, Qom, Kashan, and Esfahan. A well executed offensive or a poorly conducted defense may see a sizeable portion of the Iranian mobile forces caught in this classic double envelopment.

The last route starts near Ashkhabad and moves south toward Kerman and Bandar Abbas. Mashad should initially be bypassed unless it is heavily garrisoned with armored units. Combat units moving along this route should meet light ground resistance but can expect some attention from the US Air Force. If sufficient air cover can be provided the Soviet commander may decide to gamble and use extensive travel mode. When units assigned to this axis penetrate to Kerman, the ground forces in Afghanistan should move forward and reinforce the advance spearhead.

Airborne forces should be used to gain important objectives deep in enemy territory. The more interesting objectives are Megahex F-06, Esfahan, and Bandar Abbas. The Soviet commander should be prepared to conduct an operational drop to block retreating forces and effect their elimination if the opportunity presents itself. It is useful to hold at least one airborne division in reserve for employment late in the game. This reserve airborne division can be used to gain an important victory objective in addition to forcing the US commander to maintain forces to protect his rear areas.

### **SUPERPOWER STRATEGY—THE MIDDLE GAME (Scenarios 2 and 3)**

The Middle Game begins ostensibly when the land and air forces



of the superpowers close and begin intensive combat operations. During the Middle Game it is imperative for the U.S. commander to maintain his SLOC (Sea Line of Communication) in order for operations on the mainland to continue without interruption. If the Soviets manage to interrupt this flow of supply long enough they can win the Middle Game almost by default. It should be noted that this is very hard for the Soviet commander to accomplish and will be partly due to U.S. errors.

The major issue for the Middle Game will center on the outcome of air operations over and around the Persian Gulf. If either side is able to gain permanent air superiority at this point in the game that side should be capable of dictating the scenario's outcome. Air superiority requires the destruction of the enemies' airbases and air units. In this way sortie generation (the launching of air units) will be reduced for one side to the point whereby the other side's forces (the one with air superiority) cannot effectively be attacked from the air.

The U.S. commander must as a prerequisite maintain his supply source (U.S. supply head). This can be accomplished in two ways. First, gain sea supremacy and prevent air units from laying mines in

coastal waters. Leave the U.S. supply head on Diego Garcia and maintain the SLOC to the mainland. The second way is to move the supply head to the mainland by airlift and dispense with the need for a secure SLOC. The positioning of the supply head on Diego Garcia prevents it from being overrun by ground forces and reduces air strike opportunities due to the shortage of air units with sufficient range. The second method dispenses with the necessity of maintaining absolute sea supremacy but the supply head is now within range of the majority of the enemy air assets and substantial forces must be assigned to defend it until the air and ground situation has been resolved in the U.S. commanders favor. Since many assets required to gain air and ground supremacy will be tied up in defense this situation will be harder to achieve. (Figure 2)

Assuming a secure source of supply the U.S. commanders main concern during the Middle Game is to begin the counter-offensive from the buildup site. This requires that the air offensive be prosecuted successfully and air superiority or at least a draw be achieved. While the air battle is occurring, keep at least one third of your air units on strike missions in order to attack targets of opportunity such



as airbases and supply depots. These types of attacks will force the Soviets to keep air units on intercept to protect their logistic infrastructure and reduce their available strike sorties. The U.S. needs to establish air superiority in order to maximize chances of victory during the End Game but at a minimum must ensure that the Soviets do not gain air superiority or even an advantage in the air battle.

Since the Soviets have more air units than the U.S., a potential strategy is to overwhelm the U.S. air defenses. Penetration of strike missions to lucrative targets can be accomplished by sending more strike sorties than there are interceptors available in a given phase. This strategy can be very expensive but can often pay large dividends later in the game. If the Soviet commander can prevent the U.S. from gaining air superiority during the Middle Game then the scenario outcome will be determined by the situation on the ground.

At this point in the scenario the US resources will begin to affect the ground offensive. The close of the Middle Game should see the limit of the Soviet ground advance. Although this is very dependent on the resources remaining and the overall situation in the scenario. As the scenario transitions into the End Game the Soviet commander must begin the reduction of bypassed city garrisons and the consolidation of the territory gained. If little or no Iranian units remain in the Soviet rear areas then the offensive should continue.

The Soviet commander must also be concerned about his logistic supply lines and maintain adequate ground based air defense units on supply depots near the front lines. In this area interceptors will usually not have enough reaction time to engage enemy strike aircraft before they have dropped their ordnance and the need for a substitute defense is required. Supply depots in the rear areas should be under an air defense zone of air units and Early Warning Detection Aircraft (EWDA). Continuous disruption of the flow of supply will slow if not halt the ground advance with the obvious victory condition repercussions.

### **SUPERPOWER STRATEGY—THE END GAME (Scenarios 1 to 3)**

It is at this point in the game, usually the last 3 or 4 game turns, during which the final outcome of the game will be determined. Both commanders should take inventory of the situation on the map and evaluate what level of victory they have or have not achieved. Sometimes a commander is able to posture his forces to maintain the situation on the map or try and alter it thereby reducing the oppositions victory level. Often a decision point has been reached and the actions of the disadvantaged side are unable to affect the outcome. This can occur due to poor results earlier in play. If the outcome has not been decided then the strategies employed by both sides during the End Game must be played with accuracy.

The U.S. commander will have his major land reinforcements employed in scenarios 2 and 3 but in scenario 1 which is only 14 game turns long this will not be the case. Scenario 1 is essentially decided by the ability of the U.S. to halt the Iranian/Soviet advance with air power and Arab land assets. In scenarios 2 and 3, the 24th Mechanized division and the 5th Marine Amphibious Brigade with its associated assets will be available. Even with these units, the option to launch an offensive can only be undertaken if a substantial portion of the Iranian land units have avoided elimination or severe reduction. The primary objective should be to regain lost territory especially objectives in and around the Straits of Hormoz.

The USSR/Iranian commander in scenario 1 can employ the Soviet power projection forces (3 airborne divisions plus air assets). These forces can paradrop into the Straits of Hormoz to gain victory objectives or eliminate pockets of resistance which the Iranian forces have been unable to reduce. Careful employment of these elite formations can alter the outcome of the campaign.

In all scenarios, it is especially important that the enemy logistic infrastructure be attacked (air strikes and special forces) to attrite and halt further enemy ground advances. This will cause forward elements to retreat or be weakened through lack of supplies. Thus, creating favorable opportunities for ground counterattacks. Proper timing and location of counterattacks during the end game must always maintain the goal of effecting the scenario Victory Conditions.

In the final analysis it is the Soviet ability to "dispute" the straits

that will allow a greater than marginal victory. It is therefore important for the Soviet player to keep the Strait mined if friendly ground or naval forces cannot project a presence into Megahex J-09. It has been found that the late use of chemicals aids the process of eliminating bypassed enemy city garrisons for victory purposes. This will also allow the end game to be conducted with an economy of ground force.

### **ARAB FORCES**

This section will deal with the usage of the various arab forces in the region during each of the scenarios. Scenario 1 is treated in greater detail as this was neglected under the superpower strategy sections. For the most part the use of arab forces is dictated by the type of offensive presented by the aggressor.

### **GULF WAR SCENARIO (#1)**

#### **Iran**

Iran is the aggressor in this scenario and except for the Soviet power projection forces introduced later in the scenario, supplies the totality of the ground forces available to the Iranian/Soviet commander. The initial thrust of the Iranian ground forces is to move through Kuwait and the Neutral Territory as quickly as possible. Remember, the Gulf Council countries in this scenario cannot react in conjunction with each other until the subsequent Global Political Phase. Therefore, what is done prior to the violation of the Kuwait/Neutral Territory border is important.

The Saudi Arabian AWAC unit presents a problem to the Iranian/Soviet commander as most air or naval operations will be detected prior to mission completion. The Iranian commander should initially launch a series of anti-air missions with the express purpose of forcing the AWAC unit out of the play for the first game turn. These actions will bring Saudi Arabia into the conflict. Once the AWAC is forced out of play the majority of subsequent air and naval strikes will be conducted against Saudi Arabia. Remember that on the first game turn no other arab forces can move until their territory is violated. Therefore the first attacks must not involve another Gulf Council arab force unless it is necessary.

Regardless of the Naval Determination die roll the Iranian/Soviet commander has three naval actions available. These three or more actions should concentrate on eliminating the units of the Saudi Arabian navy. Move the Iranian naval units out to attack the in-Port Saudi naval units and attempt to eliminate them. Those that survive a naval attack should be sunk with air strikes. Once the Saudi Navy has been eliminated the remaining air strikes should concentrate on the other arab fast attack craft (FAC) and air forces. Remember that once the Saudi AWAC is forced out of play the majority of Saudi air units will be unable to intercept negating the need to escort most strike air units. Conduct most air sorties with single air units in order to insure that valuable first turn strikes are not wasted. Eliminate an enemy airbase should the opportunity present itself.

During later game turns the Iranian/Soviet commander should be able to achieve temporary air superiority before US airpower is available. Any Iranian air units that take one hit should not be sortied again until they are repaired. The lack of spare parts and pilots is reflected by a two hit capacity making these air units very fragile. Heavy attrition of air units during the beginning of the scenario will severely limit the air assets available during the critical end game. All of these Iranian air sorties will expend significant amounts of supplies. A decrease in air sorties during subsequent game turns should be justified by the damage inflicted. It is important that this draw down of supplies be replenished during later game turns.

If the initial air and naval action neutralize the opposition's forces as desired the subsequent ground force advance should have an easier advance toward their objectives. Those objectives can be characterized by three phases. The first is the initial breakthrough. Kuwait can usually be smashed in one game turn. Use all available ground units except the second armored corps (4th and 5th Armored, 6 Mech, and 2 Artillery Brigade). This corps should move through the Neutral territory and bypass Kuwait. The rest of the forces should attempt to force the Kuwaiti ground forces to retreat into the capital. These attacks should be supported by the attack

helicopters (AH 1). Once this is accomplished (continue during game turn 2 if not initially accomplished) take the first armored corps (1st and 2nd Armored, 3 Mech, and 1 Artillery Brigade), bypass the city and advance as quickly as possible down the coast road toward the Straits of Hormoz. The second armored corps should advance on Riyadh with the ultimate aim of capturing the city. The forces in Kuwait city should be sieged and reduced by the infantry divisions (7th and 8th) and the 11th armored brigade (prevents the Armor vs. Non-Armor shift). It can be also useful to use the DD naval unit to bombard the city and speed its capture.

The second phase of the campaign is the advance. The second armored corps should continue its advance toward Riyadh while the first armored corps advances on Qatar and the United Arab Emirate border. The first armored corps should capture Doha and take Qatar out of the war. Bahrain is a special case and is covered in the next paragraph. This advance phase must be conducted aggressively for the time of US intervention draws near. Once this has occurred a new set of problems will arise to slow and possibly halt the advance of the ground forces. During the entire advance phase remember to maintain the Iranian Lines of Communication and guard the depots with air defense units. Move one or more airbases forward and establish the attack helicopters and some interceptors (F-5's) plus the F-14 within range of the front. This will give the forward ground elements close air support and more responsive interceptors to protect the Lines of Communications.

The capture of Bahrain is an interesting military problem which illustrates the games emphasis on combined operations. Whenever temporary air and naval superiority over Bahrain has been achieved conduct the following operation. Move the Iranian Airmobile brigade by CH-47 helicopter to Bahrain with two supply depots carried by the other CH-47 and the C-130. Next move two marine battalions using the Amph and HC naval units. during the subsequent combat one of the supply depots will be expended and the other will be used to prevent the airmobile brigade from taking a hit for being out of supply. Once again remember, do not attempt this operation unless the Saudi AWAC has been forced out for that game turn or no Saudi interception sorties remain available for that phase. The affects of F-15's intercepting helicopters requires little imagination.

The third phase of the campaign is the intervention. At this point in the game (usually game turn 7) the US forces are available, with the Soviet power projection forces entering one game turn later. It is sometimes useful to conduct massive USSR naval and air strikes on US aircraft carriers prior to game turn 7, but if this opportunity does not present itself or fails the subsequent acceleration of US force, appearance will be detrimental to the overall campaign.

This phase of the scenario is characterized by major air operations both to gain air superiority and destroy enemy lines of communication. The outcome of this phase will decide the outcome of the game unless one side has made major mistakes early in the scenario. For more elaboration reread the Superpower strategy section on End game play.

### **Gulf Council Forces**

Kuwait has one basic strategy in scenario 1. Block the Iranian advance as long as possible. Failing to accomplish this, retreat into the capital and hold until relieved. The experience from all of the playtests indicate that one should not hold one's breath waiting. Therefore, use the Kuwaiti forces to inflict maximum hits on the assaulting Iranian forces.

Bahrain and Qatari forces should follow the Kuwaiti strategy. The Bahrainian infantry battalion has its best chance of survival by remaining in the capital. The Bahrainian Fast Attack Craft (FAC) if it survives the initial strikes should sortie and attempt to sink one of the Iranian amphibious capable naval units (Amph or HC) to reduce the force available for an assault. The Qatari forces should defend the capital and attempt to impede the coastal advance of the Iranian forward ground elements. The Qatari Mirage can be used to prevent airmobile operations and air strikes against Qatar.

The Saudi Arabian naval forces are the equal of anything in the Iranian inventory but usually few survive the initial Iranian air and naval onslaught. If any are available, destruction of the Iranian amphibious capable naval units may save Bahrain later in the game

whereas destruction of the Iranian DD naval unit (with its adequate bombardment strength) may help prolong the siege of Kuwait. The type of strategy pursued with these units depends on the style of the commander.

Prior to intervention, the Saudi air and ground forces are the most significant available to the US commander. It is important to US strategy that the majority of these forces survive the middle game for use during the end game counter-offensive. Defense of the Saudi Arabian northern border will allow the Iranian forces to quickly engage the Saudi army. This situation is to be avoided as the strength of the Iranian forces will seriously attrite even the most casual defense. A more productive tactic is to fall back on Riyadh and prevent its capture. The terrain around the capital is conducive to defense and preservation of the ground forces.

The coast will initially have to be yielded to the Iranian advance but it is within this situation that an enemy vulnerability can be created. The Iranian forces will by necessity use the coast road as a line of communication. With the Saudi forces positioned around the capital they are a constant flanking threat to the Iranian logistic infrastructure. Thus, forcing the Iranian/Soviet commander to, at a minimum, screen these forces or capture Riyadh outright. Either way substantial forces will be drained from the enemy advance toward the Straits. During the end game, as US forces arrive in strength, various amphibious assaults can be launched in conjunction with Saudi ground attacks to disrupt the Iranian lines of communication, necessitating a major retreat of their forward ground elements or a concerted air transport supply effort. If the Saudi ground forces are eliminated prior to US intervention the Iranian/Soviet end game problems will have been significantly simplified.

The Saudi air force is an integral element in the preservation of the Saudi ground forces and the retention of the capital. One or both airbases should be positioned initially near the capital. If one of the airbases is initially located near the coast be sure to co-locate a truck and an airdefense unit at the airfield. The truck will allow for quick evacuation from advancing enemy units while the air defense unit reduces the possibility of an enemy airmobile assault. The positioning of an airbase near the coast will enhance the Saudi interception capability over the airspace of Bahrain and Qatar. The majority of Saudi air units should remain on interception. The objective of the Saudi airpower is to prevent the Iranian air force from being a decisive factor in the ground battle. The air battle outcome will affect the US/Arab commanders situation during the end game.

Defense of the Straits of Hormoz falls primarily on the United Arab Emirates and Oman. The majority of the UAE forces should set up within the area of Megahex J-09 with the airfields and cities in the area getting the lion share of the ground forces. The armored car unit can be used to screen the Saudi/UAE border to slow any Iranian ground force advance. Place the airbase in Dubai (4062) to provide some protection from airborne drops and enemy air strikes. The naval FAC if it survives should attempt to inflict maximum damage until it is destroyed or runs out of SSM's.

The Omani forces have a supply source secure against ground attack allowing the commitment of the Omani ground forces to the defense of the UAE and the small, but important airfield on the operational map (4458). The initial placement of Omani forces on the operational map should consist of the guard infantry battalion. Battalion size units do not require supply if they are in a defensive posture. A ground unit cannot be eliminated due to lack of supplies, a battalion which takes only one hit is automatically immune from taking a supply penalty hit although it still may not initiate combat. Placement of the Omani airbase on the airfield (4458) is a fairly risky move but if it is not eliminated by enemy air strikes it can play a role in the defense of J-09 which it cannot as effectively accomplish from the Strategic map. Some consideration should be given to placing the airbase on the strategic map in Megahex K-09 to prevent the Iranian/USSR commander from mining the hex with air units, allowing for a US force buildup in this location.

The rest of the Omani land forces should move from the strategic map to the operational map as early in the game as possible and reinforce the defense of Megahex J-09. The Omani naval unit should also attempt to inflict as much damage as possible until it is either destroyed or runs out of SSM's.



FIG. 3

This section on scenario 1 in conjunction with the information given in the Superpower strategy sections should be taken as guidelines. Individual play will in most probability make each game somewhat unique. A careful application of the principles described should improve the utilization of a player's forces.

### **USSR INVASION SCENARIO (#2)**

This scenario depicts a Soviet invasion of Iran with the US intervening on their behalf. The Gulf Council Countries remain neutral while the superpowers battle for possession of the Persian Gulf. The basic Soviet and US strategies are discussed in the Superpower strategy sections.

#### **Iran**

One of the primary objectives of the Iranian forces in this scenario is to delay the USSR ground forces as long as possible while the US forces buildup in the south. During the opening phase of the invasion the mountains in northern Iran present the Soviet commander with difficult terrain to traverse. The Iranian/US commander should defend and delay Soviet forces in this area but not to the last man. Use the militia infantry divisions that set up in the major cities as permanent garrisons. The Iranian 1st and 2nd corps should initially be used to conduct the delaying action in the mountains but do not allow these forces to be closely engaged and eliminated early in the game. The US forces are powerful but lack a significant ground element. Therefore keep as much of the Iranian armored units from being eliminated for later use during the end game counteroffensive. Retreat the bulk of the armored units south when the Soviet offensive nears Tehran while leaving militia forces to exact a toll against the advancing Soviet units when they directly assault the city. Place all militia infantry divisions into deliberate defense during the third action stage of game turn one. This will effectively neutralize the troop quality effect suffered by these low grade units.

One soviet tactic that must be defended against during the opening and middle game is the paradrop. The Soviet commander possesses three elite airborne divisions in his order of battle. Guard important rear area facilities and key cities such as Esfahan, Bandar Abbas, and Megahex F-06. Loss of Bandar Abbas will create serious problems for the US commander especially if the Soviet ground forces are able to link up with the paratroopers. The easiest way to defend against airborne drops is to maintain interceptors over southern Iran. Remember to retreat Iranian airbases prior to their being overrun by the Soviet advance. Keep truck units stacked with forward airbases for this purpose. This will allow the Iranian airforce to survive the opening game and help defend the south later in the scenario.

The Soviet forces require 11 cities to achieve a marginal victory. The cities in northern Iran alone will give the Soviets this result. In order for the Soviets to raise their level of victory they must advance south and capture three more cities and dispute control of the straits. Therefore the Iranian/US defense should initially center on Esfahan, Ahvaz, Abadan, Kerman, Shiraz and Bandar Abbas. A good tactic to employ in slowing the soviet advance is to use airpower to attack supply depots and disrupt the supply infrastructure. The final victory will go to the commander who can better implement strategy with the forces available.

### **SOVIET INVASION OF IRAN (#3)**

This scenario is identical to scenario 2 with the addition that the Iran/Iraq war is still in progress when the invasion occurs. The Iranian strategy in this scenario is fundamentally the same as in the previous one except that Megahex F-06 must be allocated more resources. This will drain vitally needed forces from opposing the Soviet advance but in this scenario northern Iran will initially have to be given up without much of a fight. The objective is to hold the southern part of the country and prevent the Soviets from achieving a victory level above marginal until the US forces arrive in strength.

The Iraqi/Soviet commander should use the Iraqi ground forces to conduct a holding action early in the scenario. This should freeze the Iranian units in the area and prevent them from reinforcing the units defending northern Iran. If subsequent Iranian moves draw

down the forces in Megahex F-06 an offensive should be launched to capture this region. Therefore, either the Megahex F-06 will be vulnerable to an Iraqi offensive or the northern half of Iran will be captured more easily by the Soviet ground force advance.

Whereas the basic Iraqi ground force strategy in the beginning of the scenario depends on the Iranian force dispositions the air force should be used aggressively in an attempt to debilitate the Iranian air force as early in the scenario as possible. The Iranian/US air forces in the scenario depend on the Iranian air units for the majority of their offensive missions as the early US air reinforcements are tasked to defend the US buildup area. Heavy attrition of the Iranian air assets will reduce the offensive nature of the opposition air missions or leave air defense vulnerabilities which can be exploited.

Overall, the position and balance of forces in this scenario are more favorable to the Iraqi/Soviet commander. These advantages should be exploited early to offset the US forces which appear in strength during the middle portion of the scenario. These advantages at the very least should assure a marginal victory for the Iraqi/Soviet commander with excellent chances for a substantive victory.

### **TACTICS**

The focus of this section is on the nuances of play and the proper implementation of tactics. The points raised in this section are general principles which will apply to the majority of combat situations. It is through the correct implementation of tactics that a Commander's vulnerabilities to enemy actions will be minimized and chances of successful offensive operations maximized.

#### **Air Operations**

The Gulf Strike game system places strong emphasis on detection which makes the Electronic Warfare Detection Aircraft (EWDA) units the most important prerequisite for successful air operations. Use EWDA units to tie several airbases into an air defense zone whereby several airbases can provide mutual support to each other. The absence of this capability fragments the defense allowing each airbase to defend only itself. This type of vulnerability can then be exploited by the opposing commander. As a corollary when conducting offensive operations the prime target early in an attack should be an EWDA unit. Once an air defense zone has been fragmented it is easier to saturate the defenses of individual airbases and destroy them and other lucrative targets with strike missions. Attacking a cohesive air defense zone can be prohibitive in cost and once penetrated the remaining strike sorties may be insufficient to inflict commensurate damage.

The rules state (30-R-4) that a player may sortie air units from one airbase at a time, and can move up to three air units as a stack. Therefore it is important to position strike and interceptor air units at the same airbase so that the maximum amount of flexibility is available when launching sorties. The advantages of multi-role aircraft, such as the F-4, lie in their automatic flexibility coupled with effective ratings for several mission configurations.

During an air to air combat adjudication, the air units being fired on use the highest ECM rating in the stack. Mix aircraft types with high ECM ratings, such as the E-6, in with less capable air units to reduce attrition results. Additionally if a strike mission is being conducted in an area with a high probability of an enemy interception, provide escort aircraft.

One of the most lucrative ground attack targets are improperly defended supply depots. A supply depot must be destroyed over the course of a game turn or its damage is removed during the End Stage. Plan to have enough sorties available to eliminate a supply depot target or do not bother to attack it in the first place. The potential attrition and cost in supply points should not be spent, if the objective is unattainable due to inadequate force.

#### **Land Operations**

Movement for the most part should be done in Movement to Contact formation. Travel mode should only be used when the prospects of attack (including air strikes) are negligible and a swift advance will further the strategic direction of the campaign. The more intense offensive formations (Hasty and Deliberate Assault) are expensive vis-a-vis supply points and should be used sparingly. It is often useful to

go into Hasty Defense formation when the ground unit is acting as a blocking force and does not anticipate moving any great distance in the near future for the cost of changing formation will reduce its movement. Deliberate Defense formation is primarily used by infantry type units defending in cities. Militia units garrisoning a city should be permanently placed in Deliberate Defense formation to offset their poor troop quality combat shifts.

When conducting attacks derive the maximum column shift and die roll modifications through the proper use of support units (engineer, artillery, and close air support). Support units (especially artillery and engineers) should not be placed in reserve but utilized in the forward battle area. Additionally, do not mix troop quality types in an attack. The loss in column shifts is usually not compensated for by the additional attack factors.

When conducting offensive operations it is important that the forward battle area be properly supported. To ensure maximum movement and protection of the spearhead units provide engineer and air defense support. Supply depots near the front should also have ground based air defense provided. The rear area supply infrastructure and transportation assets can be covered with interceptors to free the air defense units for front line service. Maintain transport air units with supply depots and available sorties for contingency missions when enemy air power isolates friendly frontline ground units from their supply source.

### Naval Operations

The Gulf Strike system places strong emphasis on combined naval warfare operations. Successful naval operations require the integration of a commanders air, surface and sub-surface assets. Within this framework detection has a major impact on play. A naval unit that can penetrate undetected to within firing range of an enemy naval unit has a good chance of inflicting extensive damage before it is retaliated upon. It is suggested that the players use the Optional Detection rule (41-L-7) and should consider the "new" detection rule following this section for increased game versatility. Therefore, well positioned EWDA units are as important in naval operations as they are for air operations.



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**"DISMISSED!"**

Both sides possess aircraft carriers, with the US commander controlling all the large tail hook versions. Naval aviation has tremendous flexibility as well as increased vulnerability. For the USSR commander the name of the game is sink the US carriers and neutralize the US naval aviation advantage. An aircraft carrier which is within strike range of a Tu-26 (Backfire) can almost always be successfully attacked but must then contend with the F-14 retaliation that inevitably follows. (Figure 3)

The issue being highlighted by the system concerns the fact that current US naval detection ranges (E-2) closely coincide, with the launch point required for USSR long range ASM's. Therefore, unless an earlier detection can be achieved by another detection platform, which is then communicated to the naval battlegroup the air strike must inevitably achieve some level of success. Gulf Strike makes the assumption that both sides will isolate the theater by attacking communications satellites and conducting strategic EW (jamming and sabotage). The new optional detection rule will allow players to modify this basic Gulf Strike strategic assumption. Aircraft carriers that cannot obtain early detection of Tu-26 sorties must stay out of their range until these aircraft can be destroyed by air strikes and air to air combat attrition. The other major carrier killer is the SSGN which is most effective if it can avoid detection.

The US commander is not without effective military options. All forward Soviet airbases must be destroyed early in the game to prevent forward basing of Tu-26 air units. Later in the scenario the surviving Backfires should be based in the Soviet Union. As the carriers move closer to the Gulf create a picket line of EWDA units to give at least a five hex warning to the F-14 interceptors (requires new optional rule) or if not using the new optional rule ensure that the Backfires must fly through an air force air defense zone before reaching their ASM launch point. Either way, the trouble the US commander is forced to contend with highlights the effectiveness of these advanced supersonic land based air systems with their long range ASM's. The submarine threat on the other hand can be more easily handled if extensive ASW missions with SSN, P-3, and S-3 units are conducted early in the scenario leading to the destruction of the Soviet submarine force. Remember to always keep the F-14's, a strike, and an ASW air unit on interception at all times to make full use of all interception and CAP opportunities that occur during the action stage. Failure to implement this can lead to unacceptable damage to the US carrier battlegroups in the scenario.

The US commander should conduct mine clearing operations whenever the opportunity presents itself as should the USSR commander create minefields to complicate the overall naval and supply situation to his benefit. Whenever a naval unit becomes SSM depleted attempt to replenish this capability as early as the situation and the supply of these items allows. As stated earlier in the Superpower strategy section sea supremacy is a requirement for the US commander to achieve victory whereas if the USSR commander can prevent this, it is a victory.

### Optional Rules

#### Satellite Communications

A US or USSR interception can be launched if the enemy air unit is detected and is within the air detection range of a friendly unit. The interceptor air units do not have to be within the friendly air detection range either at the time of launch or thereafter.

#### Jordanian RDF

The first time that a random event is rolled which has occurred before during the scenario instead of rolling again implement the following random event.

The US commander receives the Jordanian RDF unit. It is a Brigade sized formation with a combat strength of 3, an air defense rating of 3, a movement allowance of 4, and is an elite unit. To bring the unit into play a US C-130 unit must fly off the strategic map A-07. During the next Global Military Phase the C-130 and the Jordanian RDF brigade are available in Strategic map hex A-07. This unit uses US supply.

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