

RED DRAGON FALLING: THE COMING CIVIL WAR IN CHINA

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These rules use the following color system: **Red** for critical points such as errata and exceptions, **Blue** for examples of play. Check for E-rules updates to this game @ www.modernwarmagazine.com.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Game Premise

It was the Chinese scholar-historian Wei Yuan, writing in the mid-19th century, who first formally identified his nation's apparently inescapable cycles of "chaos and humiliation" (*quru*), followed by "rejuvenation" (*fuxiang*), followed by "wealth and power" (*fuqiang*), and then back to *quru* to start again. More recently, Queens College futurist and sometimes-CIA analyst Dr. Bruce Bueno de Mosquita wrote concerning China that he sees no factors in the present-day environment working to end or deflect that same cycle.

It was the shared conclusions of those two men, working over a century-and-a-half apart, which inspired me to design this wargame modeling the military parameters and possibilities inherent in the next phase of Chinese *quru*—civil war. The likely

starting points for such a conflict would either be the collapse of the Chinese real estate bubble—which is already broadly predicted to be inescapable and will constitute the largest financial collapse in world history—or the growing potable water crisis (a third of the water consumed by the Chinese is undrinkable by US standards).

Beyond those factors, or in combination with them, there's also the gender imbalance, the fossil fuel air pollution crisis, the increasingly endemic corruption, the aging population structure, the expanding rural-urban economic gap, as well as the general collapse of ideology and the resultant moral lapse throughout the populace. One, some, or all of these factors may eventually lead to a crisis in China, as so often occurs in history, resulting in a civil war.

1.2 Scale

Each turn of play equals two months of 'real' time, probably sometime late in this decade or early in the next. Each hexagon represents 80 miles from side to opposite side.

Old Hands Note: *There is no ZOC in Red Dragon Falling (If you don't know what that means, don't worry about it).*

2.0 COMPONENTS

2.1 Map & Counters

The components to a complete game of *Red Dragon Falling (RDF)* include these rules,

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the map sheet, and 176 die-cut counters (also called “units” and “unit counters”). Players should provide themselves with one or more standard (six-sided) dice to resolve combat and other probabilistic events that occur during play, as well as two large-mouthed opaque containers (such as cereal bowls or coffee mugs).

Errata: The starting location of the 42nd Marine Group army is misprinted as 2220, which is coterminous with the city of Shantou. Place the 42nd in hex 2219 instead.

2.2 The Game Map

The game map displays the militarily significant terrain found across the ethnic-Han core area of China when portrayed at this scale. A hexagonal (“hex”) grid is printed over it to regulate unit placement and movement similar to the way squares are used in Chess and Checkers.

Errata: Hex number 2902 has been misprinted as 2802. Consider this false hex number a Chinese deception.

A unit is always only ever in one hex at any one instant. Each hex contains natural and/or manmade terrain features that may affect movement and combat. The map’s terrain representations have been altered slightly from their exact real-world configurations in order to make them conform to the hex-grid. The terrain relationships from hex to hex are, however, accurate to the degree necessary to present players with the same space/time dilemmas that would be faced by their real-world counterparts if this war were actually waged. Each hex on the map has a unique four-digit number printed in it. They’re provided to help you find specific locations referred to in the rules (for example, Beijing is in hex 2405), and to allow you to record unit positions if a match has to be interrupted and taken down before it can be completed.

2.3 Counters

There are 176 counters in the game, many of which represent combat units while others are provided as memory aids and informational markers. Carefully punch out the counters. Trimming the “dog ears” from their corners with a fingernail clipper greatly facilitates handling and stacking during play and enhances their appearance. Each combat unit-counter displays several types of information: faction, type, set-up location, combat strength, movement factor capability, and organizational identification.

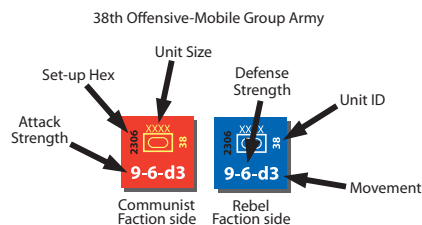
The order of battle is drawn and extrapolated from that of the Chinese armed forces of 2014.

2.4 Sample Unit

The 38th Offensive-Mobile Group Army is pictured below. It has an attack strength (or “attack factor” or “AF”) of “9,” a defense strength (or “defense factor” or “DF”) of “6,” and an indeterminate movement factor of “d3” (see section 8.0), which will be calculated anew each time it moves during play. On one side the unit is printed in the faction colors of the Communist regime, while on the other it’s printed in Rebel faction colors. The printed data are otherwise identical on both sides of the counter, and the further significance of the differently-colored sides will be described in the rules that follow.

2.5 Sides

Each unit’s faction is shown by its color scheme.



Communist side = Red background with white numbers on a yellow unit.

Rebel side = Blue background with yellow numbers on a white unit.

Taiwanese = White background with green numbers on a blue unit.

Note: The three Taiwanese army corps included in the game will start the game with their nation (Taiwan) neutral and out-of-play. It’s possible that Taiwan may enter play on the Rebel side after play has begun. See 3.1, 3.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 8.15, 9.3, 10.3, 10.12 and 11.1 for more on unique Taiwanese characteristics.

2.6 Unit Types

There are several types of units, listed as follows.

- Amphibious Assault Division
- Offensive-Amphibious Group
- Offensive Mobile Group Army
- Offensive-Defensive Group Army
- Defensive Group Army
- Static City Garrison
- Parachute Division
- Missile Division
- Air Defense Division
- Air Support

2.7 Unit Organizational Sizes

Units are classified by their size, symbolized on each unit as either XXXX, XXX, or XX, defined as follows:

XXXX —A group army

XXX —A corps

XX —A division

Note: The nine Chinese air corps don’t carry any organizational size symbol. That’s done simply to make their visual differentiation from ground units that much easier. See 3.3, 6.7, 9.5, 10.2, 10.8 and 10.11 for more details on their unique characteristics.

2.8 Static City Garrisons

The 30 city garrison markers represent agglomerations of the various constabulary and militia formations that would invariably play a large role in the urban combat of this war if it were to actually happen. They are the only static units in the game, meaning they never move from their hexes of placement, nor do they ever attack. **At the same time, however, they’re never eliminated from play, merely switching sides (shown by flipping over their counters) each time their respective cities change hands.**



2.9 Marker Counters

The following counters (a.k.a. “markers” and “chits”) are included in the game as

informational and mnemonic memory aids. Their functions are explained in the corresponding sections of the rules that follow:

Turn Marker (see section 5.0).

Communist Capital City Marker (see 3.1, 5.6, 6.6, 7.2, 9.2, 10.6, and all of section 12.0).

Rebel Capital City Marker (see 3.7, 5.6, 6.6, 7.2, 9.2, 9.3, 10.6 and all of section 12.0).

Three Gorges Dam Control & Garrison Marker (see 3.3, 3.8, 4.2, 4.4, 5.6, 7.5, 8.11, 10.6, 12.1, 13.5, 13.7 and all of section 14.0).

Communist Mandate of Heaven Points Marker (see sections 4.0, 5.0 & 7.0).

Rebel Mandate of Heaven Points Marker (see sections 4.0, 5.0 and 7.0).

Mandate of Heaven Points Deduction Marker (see sections 4.0, 5.0 and 7.0).

Communist Atomic Attacks Marker (see section 13.0).

Rebel Atomic Attacks Marker (see section 13.0).

Atomic Detonations Marker (see section 13.0).

South China Monsoon Marker (see section 15.0).

3.0 SET-UP & HEX CONTROL

3.1 Set-up

First the players should decide between themselves who will control which side. The Communist player should then put the Beijing garrison counter, along with his Capital City marker, into hex 2405. Then put the 29 remaining garrison counters into one of the opaque containers mentioned in rule 2.1. Put all Chinese (but not Taiwanese) ground and air units into the second opaque container.

3.2 Garrisons

The Rebel player should then set up the three Taiwanese corps in any three hexes of that island, after which he blindly picks a garrison unit from the container. He should immediately place that counter in the city hex printed on it with his own blue faction-color facing up. The Communist player should then take a turn, placing the resultant counter with the red side up; the two players

together go through the entire garrison container that way, alternating blind picks one at a time until all garrisons are placed.

3.3 Mobile Units

Then the two players do the same with the counters in the mobile-unit container, with the Communist player making the first pick from it and then both players alternating, **making blind picks until all those units have been deployed into the same-numbered hexes printed upon them.** Whenever an air corps is picked, the player getting it should temporarily set it aside, off the map but within easy reach. Either player should also temporarily place aside, within easy reach of both players, the bi-colored Three Gorges Dam (TGD) marker without it ever having gone into either container.

3.4 Atomic Attack Markers

Put both sides' own MHP chits in the "51" box of that track on the map sheet. Put both sides' Atomic Attack markers off the upper-left corner of that same track, immediately next to the "1" box. Set aside, within easy reach of both players, the 17 Atomic Detonation (mushroom cloud) Markers.

3.5 Turn Marker

Place the Turn marker in the "1" box of the Turn Track. Then the Rebel player should roll a die to determine the turn during which the South China Monsoon will take place, putting that marker into that same-numbered box on the Turn Track as a reminder of that determination.

3.6 MHP Deduction Chits

Take all the MHP Deduction chits and turn them all face-down and un-stacked in a convenient area near the map sheet. Shuffle them face down a bit so that neither player knows any of the numbers hidden on their bottom sides.

Note: Players may find it more convenient to place the MHP Deduction counters in a cup or so, but they must not be visible to either player, and must be drawn randomly and blindly in such a case.

3.7 Choosing a Capital

Lastly, the Rebel player should designate his side's capital city by placing that marker into any one of his cities on the map. That completes the initial set-up of the game.

3.8 Hex Control

Hex control is the term used to describe which

side is "in control" of important hexes at different times during play. Hex control is only important when considering city hexes and the TGD. At the end of the set up procedures described above, each player controls all hexes on the map that contain a mobile unit or static garrison unit of his faction. Neither player controls the TGD at the start of play. The control status of a city or the TGD changes the instant a ground unit of the other side enters it. The control status of each such hex may change any number of times during a game as units of the two sides enter and reenter them.

4.0 HOW TO WIN

4.1 Mandate of Heaven Points

Both players begin with 51 MHP. Neither player will ever have more than that number of them. MHP are voluntarily expended by the players in order to "pay" (an abstract measure of consumed resources as well as deteriorating morale and command/control capabilities) for various voluntarily chosen actions. MHP must also be involuntarily expended in order to make up for strategic defeats and blunders and alienating world opinion. See sections 8.0 through 14.0 for all the details.



4.2 Acquiring MHP

During each turn's Administrative Phase (see section 5.0) both players receive one MHP for each city they control at that time, and the player who controls the TGD gets one MHP for it. Use the two MHP Markers to keep a running total of both sides' expended and received points on the MHP Track printed on the map sheet. Any number of points above 51 MHP is simply ignored.

4.3 Expending MHP or Losses

All MHP expenditures are immediately recorded on the track as they're made or suffered. Neither player is allowed to deficit-spend MHP, so neither player's point total may ever be reduced to less than zero MHP via spending to pay for voluntary actions.

4.4 Three Gorges Dam Control

The first player to move one of his side's mobile units into the TGD hex (1913) is thereby the first to gain control of that hex. Each turn, during the Administrative Phase, the player controlling the TGD hex gets one MHP for it.

4.5 Reduced to a Regional Faction

Throughout the history of Chinese civil strife, in



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order to be taken seriously as a contender for power all across the nation, a faction has had to control cities on both sides of the Yangtze River. Accordingly, at the start of each turn's Administrative Phase, if you control cities on only one side of the Yangtze, blindly draw two MHP Deduction chits and then delete that totaled number of points indicated on those MHP Deduction chits (2 to 12) from your present MHP total (in other words, flip them over, total them, and then subtract this amount). For this purpose, Shanghai (2813) and Nanjing (2612) are considered to lie north of the river, while Wuxi (2712) is south of it. Return drawn MHP Deduction chits to the cup immediately thereafter.

4.6 Losing by Zeroing Out

If a player's MHP total goes to zero at any time, play stops immediately and he loses the game.

4.7 Win or Draw

At the end of Turn 6, you win if you control one or more (un-nuked/un-flooded) cities both north and south of the Yangtze, and if you have at least 1.5 times more (150%) MHP than your opponent. If neither player wins by that reckoning, that match has ended in a draw game.

5.0 PLAYING & ENDING TURNS

5.1 Game Turns

Each match of *Red Dragon Falling* may last no more than six turns. Each turn is divided into two major segments: First the Alternating Actions Phase (AAP), and then the Administrative Phase.

5.2 First Action

At the start of each turn's AAP, players determine which of them will perform that turn's first action. It may be that neither player cares anything about it that turn. In those cases, roll a die and the high roller carries out the first action of that turn. If, however, one or both players want to take the first action of that turn, they enter into an open MHP bidding auction. That's done verbally, with the player who at the time has the highest MHP total stating his interest in bidding first and then offering the first bid. Bids may be offered by either player in any whole-number MHP amounts. The player ultimately willing to spend the higher MHP total gets the first action. Note, though, that both the winner and loser in such auctions must immediately deduct their own number of bid MHP from their side's total. Unlike typical auctions, the

loser is not obviated from his bid; he must pay whatever was the highest amount that he bid, even if he lost the last auction.

5.3 Subsequent Actions & Ending a Turn

Once a turn's player-order action sequence has been determined as described above, it remains unchanged for the rest of that turn. Each player executes one action of his choice, followed by the other player, alternating between the two until one player announces he will "pass." When one player has passed, the other player is free to conduct as many more actions as he desires, executing them uninterruptedly (one at a time) until he's also ready to announce he's finished (pass), thereby ending that AAP and that turn.

Note: Once a player has announced he's passing, he may not undo his decision that turn.

5.4 Actions

Within the parameters of the process described above and in section 4.0 and 7.0, there's no limit on the number of actions the players may perform in each turn's AAP. In general, any action may be conducted any number of times during each turn's AAP. **The two exceptions are: 1) taking the turn's first action may only be done once per AAP; and 2) once Taiwan is brought into the war, that action may no longer be conducted. Once in, Taiwan remains in for the rest of the game.**

5.5 Administrative Phases

If neither player has won the game by the start of Turn 6's Administrative Phase, resolve the phase and then make a final check of the situation as described in rule 4.7 after the resolution of Turn 6's Administrative Phase. During the other turns, use the Administrative Phases simply for MHP tabulation and general housekeeping.

5.6 MHP Revenue Additions

At the start of each Administrative Phase, both players should cooperate to openly calculate the number of MHP each receives for the control of un-nuked (and un-flooded) cities and the Three Gorges Dam hex (provided it hasn't been nuked, destroyed in conventional combat or deliberately opened). Each such city yields one MHP, as does control of the TGD.

5.7 MHP Deduction Chits

If, during the course of the turn, one or both players were required to make blind MHP Deduction chit pulls, at the very end of the

Administrative Phase, after MHP revenue additions have been made, the player(s) holding such inverted MHP Deduction chits should flip it/them over (so both can see the previously hidden numbers). Both players then add up their own total point value deductions and subtract that number of points from their own totals (possibly zeroing out and thereby ending the game). If both of the players zero-out during the same Administrative Phase, that match ends in a draw. Players are required to make blind MHP Deduction chit pulls for moving their capital, making atomic attacks, and opening the Three Gorges Dam.

6.0 UNIT STACKING

6.1 Stacking Defined

Stacking is the term used to describe the piling of more than one friendly unit into the same hex at the same time. Opposing units never stack together, only friendly units stack together.

6.2 Stacking Enforcement

The stacking rules are only in effect at the end of each action. During actions, any number of friendly units may enter and pass through any otherwise enterable hex (see section 8.0). If, at the *end* of any action, any hex(es) is/are found to be over-stacked, the player owning the units in that/those hex(es) must eliminate enough excess units there, of his choice, so as to bring the hex(es) back into compliance with the stacking rules. Eliminated units are recycled normally.

6.3 Taiwanese Stacking

The three Taiwanese corps, if brought into play, are considered to be in all ways "friendly" to the mainland Chinese units of the Rebel side, and they may therefore stack with them within the strictures of the rules given below. Each Taiwanese corps is counted for stacking as if it were a group army.

6.4 Group Armies Stacking Limit

No more than one group army or Taiwanese corps may stack in a hex.

6.5 Division Stacking Irrelevancy

Divisions of all types don't count for stacking. There may be any number of divisions in a hex, along with one group army or Taiwanese corps.

6.6 City Garrison Stacking Irrelevancy

City garrisons don't count for stacking. There may be any number of divisions, along with one group army or Taiwanese corps, in a hex that also contains a friendly city garrison.

Further, both sides' Capital City chits have no stacking value; they're simply memory aids.

6.7 Air Corps Stacking Irrelevancy

Air Corps are held off the map until used in combat. While they're off map, stacking isn't a consideration for them, and even when they're committed to battle they have no stacking value.

6.8 Informational Markers Stacking Irrelevancy

The informational markers listed in rule 2.9 have no stacking values and may be added to any hexes according to the rules for their respective uses.

6.9 No Fog o' War

Both players are always free to examine all stacks on the map and the map sheet, both friendly and enemy.

6.10 Stacking Order

In general, the order in which units in a hex are piled together has no significance. The exception is the 1st Air Defense Division must always be the top unit in its stack so that the opposing player may know it is present before he commits any Air Corps (see 10.11).

7.0 ACTIONS IN GENERAL

7.1 Alternating Actions

During each turn's Alternating Actions Phase, both players take turns choosing and conducting actions one at a time in alternating fashion. The only way one player may conduct more than one action in a row is when the other player has terminated his own action-taking for the turn by declaring he's "passed" (see 5.3).

7.2 Types of Actions

There are nine types of actions from which to choose for the Rebel player, and eight types of actions for the Communist player. That difference comes from the fact that only the Rebel player may choose to attempt to bring otherwise neutral Taiwan into play on his side. The voluntary actions types are:

- 1) bid to win the right to take what would then otherwise be the turn's first action;
- 2) attempt to bring Taiwan into the war;
- 3) reclaim an available recycled unit;
- 4) move a friendly force on the map;
- 5) subvert an enemy force;
- 6) launch an attack into any one enemy-occupied hex;
- 7) relocate your capital city;

- 8) conduct an atomic attack into any one hex; and
- 9) open the Three Gorges Dam.

7.3 Bid to Take a Turn's First Action

See rule 5.2. That kind of first-action-auction may only be gone through once at the very start of each turn's Alternating Actions Phase. No disruptions to the alternating action pattern may be bid for once the phase actually gets going.

7.4 Attempt to Bring Taiwan into the War

Taiwan may only be brought into play once, though any number of attempts may be made by the Rebel player (only) to try to do that throughout the game (even during the same turn). Once Taiwan is in play, it remains in (always on the Rebel side) throughout the rest of that game. Each MHP expended for this action earns one die roll attempt. On Turn 1, Taiwan comes in on a die roll result of one; on Turn 2, it comes in on a one or two, etc., up to Turns 5 and 6, when the results needed are one through five on both those turns. If Taiwan comes in prior to you having used up all your already-purchased die rolls, those MHP are still considered spent.

7.5 Opening the Three Gorges Dam

Opening the Three Gorges Dam may only be done once per match. To open the dam you must presently be in control of that hex (1913). To conduct the action, simply announce you're doing so and then make a blind two-chit MHP Deduction chit pull from the pool of those counters (see 3.6). For more on the details of the TGD, see section 14.0.

7.6 Repeating Actions

Except as described within the strictures above, there are no limits on the number of times a type of action may be conducted during each turn's Alternating Action Phase or over the course of an entire game during those phases, by either or both players. Similarly, and again within the strictures above, there are no choice priorities among the actions. For instance, it's not automatically necessary that you choose a movement action prior to choosing an attack action, etc.

8.0 MOVE A FRIENDLY FORCE

8.1 Force Defined

A "force" is defined as one or more units in the same hex that are moved together to a common destination hex. No "dropping off" or splitting off sub-stacks is allowed during a move, but it's

permissible to leave stay-behind units in the starting hex. Such stay-behinds would not get to move as part of that same action, however; a separate and subsequent move action would need to be taken by you in order to do that.

8.2 MHP Cost to Move

It costs one MHP to move a force, no matter what the length of the move or size of the force.

8.3 City Garrisons

City garrisons are never part of a moving force, though mobile units are allowed to be constituted into a force in city hexes, and then move away, leaving behind the garrison along with, possibly, one or more other mobile units you don't want to move as part of that force.

8.4 Determining Movement Factors (MF)

Every moving force must have its exact movement factor calculated for it anew each time it starts a move action. To do that, note the lowest movement factor printed on the units within the force: "d1," "d2" or "d3." The "d" stands for "die" or "dice," and is there as a reminder that, unlike most wargames, the MF printed on these counters don't represent the final number of MF actually available for their use.

Instead, for "d1" units you roll one die, thereby getting an MF of one through six. For "d2" units you roll two dice, getting an MF between two and 12. For "d3" units you roll three dice, for an MF of between three and 18. Only one roll is made for any moving force. If all the units in a force have the same "d" number, simply roll that number of die/dice. If there is a mixture of "d" types, roll for the *lowest* type and that result becomes the MF for that entire moving force for that action.

8.5 No Minimum Movement

Unlike many other games, there's no minimum movement guarantee for any moving force. A force may only enter a hex if it has the MF available to pay the full cost involved in that move (see below).

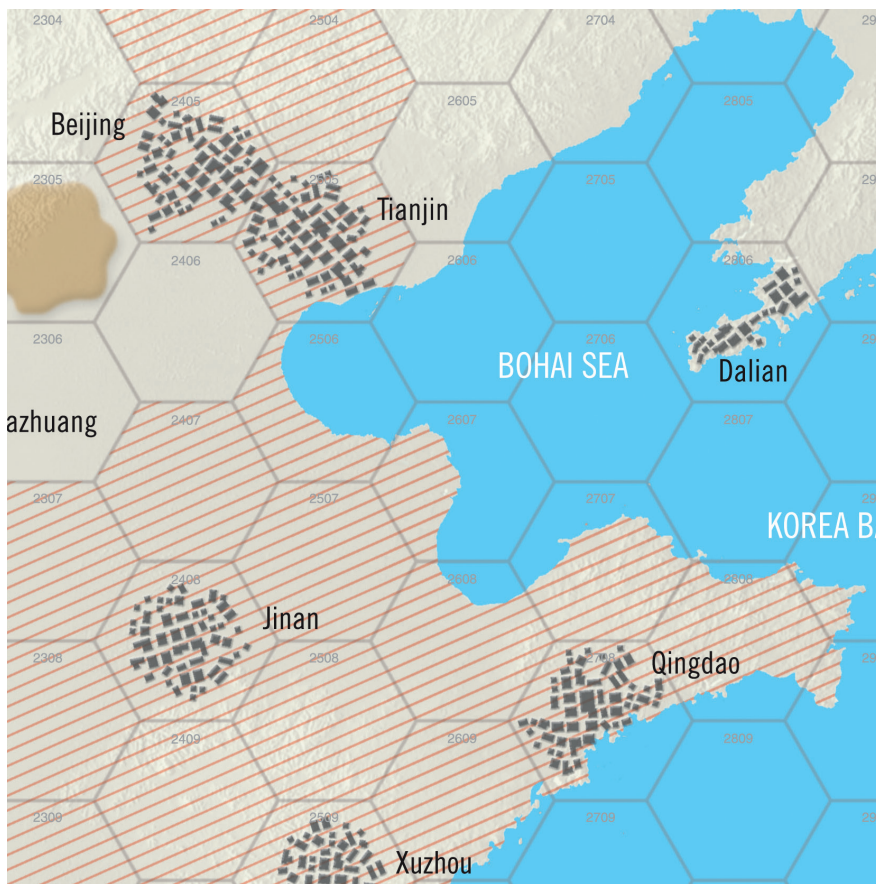
8.6 Movement Procedure

All movement takes place from hex-to-adjacent hex within the strictures given below and summarized on the Terrain Effects Chart (TEC) in section 16.0. No force may ever give or loan MF to another force, nor may any hexes be skipped over during movement.

8.7 Enemy Units & Movement

In general, no moving force may enter a hex

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containing one or more enemy units of any kind. For the exceptions, see 8.12 and 8.13 below.

8.8 Terrain Effects on Movement

A force must usually expend one MF to enter a clear terrain hex (but also see section 15.0). To enter certain other types of hexes, a force must generally expend more than one MF. For a hex to be considered clear terrain, it must be all clear without any rough terrain or high population density terrain in it.

8.9 High Density Population Areas (HDP)

The striped hexes on the map are the HDP, areas in which the population density is more than 600 persons per square kilometer. In effect, those areas constitute massive multi-hex cities. The cost to enter an HDP hex is normally two MF per hex (but also see 8.12, 8.13 and section 15.0).

8.10 Cities

Note that individual cities are shown as existing within HDP hexes as well as hexes outside of those areas. Cities in non-HDP hexes are considered to exist in hexes that are otherwise clear terrain. Cities within HDP

areas don't add any further movement costs, or combat effects, beyond normal city combat effects (see 10.7) to those hexes; however, their individual locations serve as focal points for garrison units and MHP revenue collection. Thus, for example, controlling HDP hex 1919 wouldn't yield any MHP to you, nor is there ever a garrison unit placed in that hex, whereas Foshan, located within HDP hex 1920, does get a garrison and does generate an MHP each turn that it remains un-nuked.

8.11 Yangtze Transport Corridor (YTC)

The Yangtze River isn't only a river in the natural sense, it's also a highly developed transport corridor with railroad and highways densely paralleling it on both banks. Accordingly, if a force begins its move in a YTC hex, by expending one MF it may move any distance along the corridor (from east to west or west to east). If it had MF remaining after that, you could then continue its move, again paying all regular terrain costs, outside the corridor. The same is true for a moving force that enters the corridor during the course of its action: by paying one MF, it could move infinitely

along the corridor (and even exit it again provided it still had further MF to expend).

Exception: Entering YTC hexes containing enemy units is still blocked by that enemy presence.

8.12 YTC Rough & HDP Hexes

Note that YTC hexes are otherwise clear or HDP terrain. Those costs would be paid when moving to enter the corridor, not when moving along it as described above.

8.13 Destroying the YTC

If the Three Gorges Dam (TGD) is deliberately opened or simply destroyed in conventional combat or via an atomic attack in that hex, the entire YTC permanently converts to rough terrain and the three cities downriver cease to exist for all purposes for the rest of game. The TGD/YTC may be destroyed by an atomic attack, or possibly whenever there's a conventional attack launched into or immediately adjacent to the TGD hex. In the case of conventional attack, after resolving the regular portion of that combat, the attacking player rolls another die. On a result of six, the TGD (and YTC) are permanently destroyed.

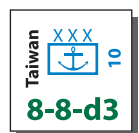
8.14 Parachute Division Special Movement

If a moving force consists only of one or more parachute divisions, that force pays only one MF per hex entered (or two per hex during the south China monsoon in hexes affected by that rule; see section 15.0). Divisions using such movement may even "fly over" —but not stop atop —hexes containing enemy mobile units or garrisons as well as all-sea hexes.

Exception: This special kind of parachute division movement is never allowed into or through a hex containing the 1st Air Defense Division when it's on the opposing side (see 6.10).

8.15 Amphibious Group Armies, Taiwanese Corps & 1st Amphibious Assault Division

Amphibious Group Armies, Taiwanese Corps & 1st Amphibious Assault Division may move across and through all-sea hexsides and hexes paying one MF per hex to do so (even during the monsoon). The group armies and corps may not end a move in any all-sea hex; the Amphibious Assault Division may do so. Further, the division may only move and/or attack into coastal and/or all-sea hexes. Amphibious group armies and corps may not attack from all-sea hexes,



while the division may do so (and without any special “invasion” combat penalty). Further, all three of these types of amphibious units pay only one MF per hex when moving along coastal hexes via hexsides that contain at least some portion of sea. They may even move through and past (but not stop in) coastal hexes containing enemy units in that way.

8.16 Perpetual Actions

There are no limits on the number of move actions a particular force may carry out over the course of a single turn’s Alternating Action Phase or throughout those of the entire game in all its turns. A given force might be moved, and then, for your next action, you could choose to move it again (or perform any other action with it for which it was eligible).

9.0 SUBVERT AN ENEMY FORCE

9.1 Subversion Attempt

If you choose to conduct an action by making an attempt to subvert (make it defect to your side) an enemy force, use the following procedure and strictures. Indicate the enemy force you will attempt to subvert. In general, all hexes containing one or more enemy units, mobile and/or static, are vulnerable to subversion. The exceptions are as follows.

9.2 Capital Exception

Your opponent’s capital city hex, and all the units in it, are invulnerable to subversion. Note, though, spending time in the capital doesn’t earn any mobile unit or force permanent invulnerability to subversion after leaving the capital hex; it only works while they’re in that hex.

9.3 Taiwanese Exception

A Taiwanese unit alone in a hex is never vulnerable to subversion. If, however, one of those units is stacked with one or more Rebel units in a hex other than the Rebel capital, you may try to subvert those *Rebel* units. If that subversion attempt succeeds, convert the Rebels present and permanently eliminate the Taiwanese unit.

9.4 Procedure

After identifying the force you’re going to attempt to subvert, openly announce how many MHP you will expend in that attempt. Each two MHP spent allow you to make one subversion-attempt die roll. A subversion attempt die roll succeeds in subverting the selected enemy force on a roll of one; all other die roll results are failures.

So, for example, you might announce you’re going to spend 12 MHP to make six rolls against the enemy force you’d selected. If an early roll succeeds, all the previously dedicated MHP are still considered to have been spent. Any number of MHP may be expended per subversion action, but the entire amount must be announced before the first die is rolled.

Further, only one enemy force may undergo a subversion attempt each time you select it as your action. Don’t make individual die rolls for each unit in the selected force, make one die roll per purchased attempt for the entire force. Forces subvert or resist as a whole; no partial subversions can ever take place.

9.5 Enemy Controlled Air Corps

Enemy controlled Air Corps sitting off map are also subject to subversion. Note, though, they’re always considered to be unstacked, so they could only be subverted in this way one air corps at a time (per attempt).



9.6 Hearts & Minds

Within the strictures given above, forces may potentially be subverted and counter-subverted any number of times per Alternating Action Phase and per game.

10.0 ATTACK A HEX

10.1 Attack Procedure

It costs one MHP to launch one attack into any one enemy occupied hex. Every attack has only one enemy-occupied hex as its objective. No unit in a hex being attacked may in any way be withheld or excluded from the defense of that hex.

10.2 Mandatory Losses

All attacking *divisions* of all types (including missile divisions that conduct missile attacks), as well as air corps, are automatically eliminated at the end of an attack in which they just participated, whether or not the attack succeeds. Further, involved air corps are auto-eliminated on the defending side as well. And again, that’s true no matter the actual combat result.

10.3 Variable Losses

Both sides’ participating group armies, as well as Taiwanese corps and city garrisons, are eliminated when on the defense if a Defender Eliminated (DE) result is obtained. *Group armies*

and Taiwanese corps are never eliminated outright in an attack, failed or otherwise (and garrisons never attack, though they may be collocated in a hex containing attacking units).

10.4 Missile-Division-Only Attacks

Missile-division-only attacks are allowable, but they have no effect on garrisons (in city hexes). Other units in city hexes are subject to possible elimination in missile-division-only-attacks.

Note: *Missile division units have an infinite range; all other ground unit types may only attack from adjacent hexes, although missile divisions are eliminated for participating in attacks at any range (representing an expenditure of their missile ordnance).*

Even though garrison units are unaffected by missile-division-only attacks, include their DF when calculating odds for such attacks (see below). *Missile divisions cannot ever participate in the defense of any friendly unit.*

10.5 Attack Odds

To calculate an attack, first designate the hex being attacked along with those of your units that will be participating in the attack. Multi-hex attacker deployment is allowed, and not all units in a hex need participate in an attack, only those you designate as attackers. Total the AF of all your participating (attacking) ground units, which is the “attack strength.” Divide that number by the totaled DF of all the defending enemy units in the hex being attacked (round down any remainder, if any). That resultant whole number becomes the odds ratio. *For example, if 50 attack factors are attacking into a hex with a defense strength 15, that calculation would go as follows: 50 divided by 15 equals 3.33, which is rounded down to 3. That three is then considered the odds ratio, in other words 3:1 (“three to one”).*

10.6 City & Capital City & TGD Garrison DF

City garrisons have no defense factors printed on them. Instead, each one’s DF is determined anew each time it’s attacked. To do that, simply roll the die, thereby generating a DF of between one and six. Note, however, that capital city garrisons always automatically get a DF of six, while the TGD garrison unit always has a DF of just one.

10.7 Terrain Effects on Combat

If the hex being attacked is a rough hex, reduce the calculated odds by one ratio. *For example, what would otherwise be a 2:1 attack would, if launched into a rough terrain hex, instead*

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becomes a 1:1. If the hex being attacked is an HDP hex, reduce the odds by two such shifts; so, for example, a 4:1 attack into an HDP hex would become a 2:1. The same is true when attacking into a city hex outside the HDP. There can never be an odds shift greater than two ratios due to terrain, however.

10.8 Air Corps

Air Corps are committed as the last step—potentially by both players—just prior to the attacker making the combat resolution die roll. To do so, if both players are holding available air corps off to the side of the map, they should both **secretly** select the number of them they want to participate in the battle. Each committed air corps shifts the odds one ratio in its side's favor. (Net out the shifts of opposing air corps, after all air corps have been counted for each side.) If only one player has air corps available, he should simply announce the number that will participate (which could be zero, if he prefers not to commit any). Remember: all air corps of both sides that participate in a battle are thereby automatically eliminated and recycled to the turn track after combat is resolved.

10.9 Final Odds & Combat Resolution

Final Odds, as calculated using the rules above and that are less than 1:1 have automatic "No Effect" (NE) results, meaning that attack has failed and the action is over (but still, see 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4 above, as they all still apply).

Combat results are simply a die roll equal to or less than the odds ratio. **For example, odds of 1:1 achieve a "Defender Eliminated" (DE) result on a roll of one; odds of 2:1 get DE on rolls of one or two, etc., on up to automatic DE at 6:1 and higher.**

A DE means that all the defending mobile ground units in the hex are eliminated and recycled to the turn track. Any city garrison in the hex remains in place, but is flipped over to show that it now belongs to the player who just won the attack. There are no combat results other than DE and NE.

10.10 Repeat Attacks

Any given hex may potentially be attacked, by one or both players, any number of times during each turn's Alternating Action Phase. Each such attack, however, constitutes a separate action and so must be paid for afresh with MHP each time it's launched.

10.11 1st Air Defense Division Advantage

No parachute divisions or air corps may be used in an attack against the hex containing this division. Beyond that, the division does participate normally in the defense of its hex, and it also attacks normally and without any special advantage.

10.12 Taiwanese

Taiwanese corps are the only "two-step" units in the game. That is, when a full-strength Taiwanese unit suffers a DE result ("full-strength," meaning its "8-8" side is showing), that unit isn't removed from play; rather, it's flipped over so its "reduced" side (with the factors "4-4") is showing. Only a second DE would then fully eliminate such a reduced corps. A reduced Taiwanese corps never regains its full strength, nor do they ever recycle. An atomic attack fully and immediately eliminates them, however.

10.13 South China Monsoon Combat Effect

During the turn in which the South China Monsoon is in effect (see section 15.0), all attacks made into hexes south of (but not in) the YTC suffer a one-ratio odds reduction (in addition to any other normally applicable shifts).

10.14 Pre-emptive Attack upon Taiwan

The Communist player may choose to preemptively bring a still-neutral Taiwan into the war (on the Rebel side) by launching one or more attacks into units in any hexes of that island.

11.0 RECYCLING ELIMINATED UNITS

11.1 After Units are Eliminated

Other than Taiwanese corps, all units eliminated in combat are immediately recycled—for possible later reentry back into play—no matter the exact circumstances of their eliminations.

11.2 Recycling Procedure

At the end of each battle, roll a die for each of the units of both sides that were eliminated during that engagement (including participating air corps and divisions that were automatically eliminated). As each unit is rolled for, place it in the Turn Track box, the number of which corresponds to the die roll result added to the present turn number. **For example, say it's Turn 2 and a recycling unit has a "3" rolled for it. That unit would be placed in the Turn 5 box on the Turn Track. Those units that get**

a result that would bring them back into play after Turn 6 are permanently out of the game.

11.3 Faction Irrelevancy

When placing recycling units on the track, it's not important which faction color is showing. All recycling units may potentially be reclaimed into the service of either side, no matter which side they were fighting for when they were eliminated. Any eligible unit may go through the recycling process any number of times per game.

11.4 Claiming Recycling Units

Claiming one available recycled unit is a discrete action that costs one MHP each time you choose to do it. Simply expend your MHP and reclaim the desired unit. Any number of reclamation actions may be conducted in each Alternating Actions Phase during Turns 2 through 6 (no units may possibly be available during Turn 1). If a turn ends and there are still unclaimed units in that turn's box on the track, simply slide those units into the next turn box (where they join—not displace—the units that may already have been in that box).

11.5 Immediate Arrival

Reclaimed units immediately appear in, and in subsequent actions may operate normally from, any friendly cities. Stacking counts in the placement of recycling units.

11.6 Recycling Exception

Units lost in atomic attacks (see section 13.0) are never eligible for recycling.

12.0 MOVING CAPITAL CITIES

12.1 Capital City Placement

Both players must always maintain a "capital" for their side in any one friendly controlled city (but not the TGD) on the map. At the start of play, Beijing is always the capital of the Communist side while the Rebel player picks his during set up (see 3.7). See below, along with 3.1, 3.7, 5.6, 6.6, 7.2, 9.2, 9.3 and 10.6 for more details.

12.2 Voluntary Relocation

If for any reason you decide that you want to move the location of your capital, you may declare that as an action. The cost is indeterminate at first. That is, move your Capital marker from its location to the friendly controlled city you want to serve as your new seat of government. Then blindly pull one MHP deduction chit and keep it face





down—with the number on it unknown by you and your opponent—until it comes time during that turn’s Administrative Phase to reveal and add up all such markers (see 5.7).

12.3 Relocation Due to Atomic Attack

If your capital city is nuked, you must immediately relocate it to another city. This kind of emergency relocation doesn’t count as you performing an action, nor does it cost you any MHP; it’s done as part of resolving your opponent’s atomic attack action (see section 13.0).

12.4 Lost in Conventional Combat

If your opponent launches a ground attack against your capital and he wins that battle, thereby gaining control of that hex, you must immediately make an emergency relocation of your capital to any one of your other friendly controlled cities. This kind of emergency relocation doesn’t count as you performing an action; it’s done as part of resolving your opponent’s attack action. It does, however, cost you MHP. That is, you must immediately and blindly pull three MHP deduction chits and keep them face down—with the numbers on them unknown by you and your opponent—until it comes time during that turn’s Administrative Phase to reveal and add up all such markers (see 5.7).

13.0 ATOMIC ATTACKS

13.1 Nuclear Exchange

Both players have effectively unlimited numbers of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons available, and using them to



launch “atomic attacks” is always one of the types of action available for you to choose.

13.2 Target Selection

To conduct an atomic attack action, simply designate any hex on the map as its target, permanently eliminate and set aside all the units in it at that moment, and place a mushroom cloud blast marker there with your faction’s background color showing.

13.3 Nuclear Escalation

When you make your first atomic attack, you pay for it by blindly pulling one MHP deduction chit. Keep it face down—with the number on it unknown by you and your opponent—until it comes time during that turn’s Administrative Phase to reveal and add up all such markers (see 5.7). When (if) you make a second atomic attack, the procedure is the same but this time you blindly pull *two* MHP Deduction chits. A third atomic attack by you would require *three* chits to be pulled, a fourth attack would call for *four* pulls, etc., *ad infinitum*.

13.4 Atomic Attack Marker

Each side has an Atomic Attacks marker provided for use on the MHP Track as a memory aid. Both players keep a separate tally of their own atomic attacks; the number of such attacks launched by your opponent in no way affects how many MHP chits you will pull at the time of your next atomic attack.

13.5 Annihilation

There’s never any variability in the on-board result of atomic attacks: automatic and permanent elimination of all units in the target hex and its permanent conversion

into rough terrain. Cities so targeted cease to exist for purposes of the game.

13.6 Pre-emptive Nuclear Strike upon Taiwan

The Communist player may choose to preemptively bring a still-neutral Taiwan into the war (onto the Rebel side) by launching an atomic attack into a hex on that island (the operative goal of which would be, presumably, the destruction of one of the corps located there).

13.7 Targeting the Three Gorges Dam

If the TGD hex is the target of an atomic attack, it’s permanently destroyed and the effects are as given in 8.13.

14.0 THE THREE GORGES DAM (TGD)

14.1 Opening the Three Gorges Dam

The player who controls the TGD may open it (but no more than once per game). That decision counts as an action. The effect is the same as described in rule 8.13. See 7.5.



14.2 Capturing the Three Gorges Dam

Neither player controls the TGD at the start of play. The first player to end a unit’s move there gets control and places the TGD marker with his side showing. That garrison marker is thereafter normally immortal, simply flipping over when control of its hex changes, until such time as the TGD is nuked or destroyed in a conventional attack or opened.

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16.0 CHARTS & TABLES

16.1 Terrain Effects Chart (TEC)

Terrain	Movement Cost	Combat Effect
Clear Hex	1	No Effect
Rough Hex	2*	1L
High Density Population Hex	2*	2L
City in Clear Hex	1	2L
Yangtze Transport Corridor Hex	1 = Infinite (see 8.11)	Depends on the other terrain in the hex.
All-Sea Hex & Hexsides	1 for Amphibious & Airborne Others Not Allowed Only 1AAD May End Move In	Amphibious & Airborne: No Attack Into (except per 8.15) Others = Not Allowed.

1L: decrease combat odds by one level; for example, 3:1 becomes 2:1.

2L: decrease combat odds by two levels; for example, 3:1 becomes 1:1.

During the monsoon turn, all movement costs south of the YTC are

+1 to what's shown above & all attacks there are +1L.

Airborne always pay only 1MF, except in monsoon, when they always pay 2MF.

16.3 Action Summary Table

Type of Action	Costs & Rules References
Take Turn's First Action	Variable MHP cost via auction. See 5.2 and 7.4.
Bring in Taiwan	Any number of MHP may be expended. See 7.3. Rebel player only.
Reenter a Recycled Unit	One MHP per unit per action. See section 11.0.
Move a Friendly Force	One MHP per force. See section 8.0.
Subvert an Enemy Force	Any number of MHP may be spent. Every two expended earns one die roll. See section 9.0
Launch an Attack	One MHP per attacked hex. See section 10.0
Move Your Capital	Variable MHP cost by MHP Deduction chit pull(s). See section 12.0.
Make an Atomic Attack	Variable MHP cost by MHP Deduction chit pull(s). See section 13.0
Three Gorges Dam Destroyed or Opened	Variable MHP cost by MHP Deduction chit pull(s). See section 14.0

14.3 Three Gorges Dam MHP

While still operating, the TGD generates one MHP per turn for its owning player during the Administrative Phase. For more details on all aspects of the TGD, see: 3.3, 3.8, 4.2, 4.4, 5.6, 7.5, 8.11, 10.6, 12.1, 13.5 and 13.7.

15.0 SOUTH CHINA MONSOON

15.1 Occurrence

The South China Monsoon takes place during one turn of play as determined by rule 3.5.



15.2 Effects

On the designated turn, the monsoon affects all hexes south of (but not in) the YTC. The effect on that turn's movement in that area is that all movement costs shown on the Terrain Effects Chart are increased by one MF. Further, all non-atomic attacks into monsoon hexes have their odds decreased by one ratio in addition to all other regularly applicable shifts.

16.2 Movement Allowances Table

Type of Unit Moving	Movement Factor
Taiwanese Corps & Offensive-Mobile Armies & Divisions	3d6 (3-18 MF)
Offensive-Defensive & Offensive-Amphibious Armies	2d6 (2-12 MF)
Defensive Armies	1d6 (1-6 MF)

DESIGN NOTES

Dragon vs Bear Issue #12

By Joseph Miranda

Way back in *S&T* issue 42 there appeared a wargame called *East Is Red (EIR)*. It covered a hypothetical war between the Soviet Union and Red China, fought over far eastern Siberia and Manchuria—the game title referring to the communist systems of both powers as well as a then-popular insurgent slogan. Anyway, I always liked *EIR* because it had a relatively simple system for a conflict which swept across vast geographical expanses—the map going from the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Beijing. Units were corps level with divisional breakdowns for the Soviet army. The game had airpower and included those perennial crowd pleasers, tactical nuclear weapons. Overall, it was not a not too shabby model of a potential conflict in that part of the world. But it did have a couple of shortfalls, like no provision for airborne and special operations forces, though perhaps because the importance of these arms to the Soviet military was not fully realized at the time. I ended up doing a variant for *EIR* in *S&T 226*, adding counters for airborne and other formations plus some additional scenarios. I then found myself covering that same ground again for *Strike North*, a what-if game based on a Japanese conflict with the USSR breaking out into open warfare during World War II. All this leads up to my current foray into the Far East, *Dragon v Bear* covers a hypothetical fight between China and post-Soviet Russiasome time in the next decade, again set in eastern Siberia and Manchuria, highlighting the differences in the armed forces of today.

Once More into the Far East

I decided to base the system on the original *EIR* while adding in elements of today's revolution in Military Affairs. The critical game system is called *hyperwar*. Certain units have hyperwar capability, the combination of command control, weapons, and sensors to operate at the level of American forces in the recent Gulf Wars. For example, these units include Chinese airborne and marine divisions since they are part of their quick reaction force. The Soviets also have several types which are qualified, and both sides have special fifth generation fighter aircraft. Hyperwar units have a couple of special abilities in the game. One is that that they can move and fight during a player turn's second impulse. Another is that they can use a special High-Tech CRT which has improved results (though sometimes they can backfire as high tech weapons can degrade under sustained combat). Non-hyperwar units, most of the units for both players, have to struggle along with Cold War era weapons and tactics. This brings in some interesting situations, because while hyperwar qualified units are useful for leading attacks and exploiting breakthroughs, there are never enough of them and their loss in combat can paralyze an offensive.

One system I adapted from *EIR* is that players can build corps from smaller units. Right now, Russia and China are going over to a new organization, replacing the old tank armies of the Cold War with corps sized units. Sometimes termed operational groups, they are to be composed of divisions and brigades—with brigades rapidly becoming the primary maneuver unit.

Each side can build combined arms and mechanized corps; the Chinese can also build infantry armies. The critical thing is that



Sample articles from *MOVES Online*. Other material available includes: After Action Reports, additional scenarios and designer/player notes.

the combined arms corps have hyperwar capability, while their component units do not. Effectively, if you want to utilize modern tactics, you have to concentrate your limited numbers of good leaders and advanced systems. (This is not the case for US intervention units in the game—American brigades have the qualification for Hyperwar owing to much better training and lavish equipage.)

This puts players in an interesting dilemma: to go over to the offensive, they have to concentrate units, but that means sacrificing defensive coverage of the front, and there is a lot of front to cover, from Irkutsk to Vladivostok. One thing we found quickly in playtesting was that there are never enough units to do everything at once. Researching the order of battle, I found that both Russia and China have cut the size of their armed forces considerably since the end of the Cold War. For example, the Russians begin the basic scenario with about a dozen brigades. The Chinese, while having more units, are spread out from the Amur River back to Beijing, so it can be difficult for them to concentrate.

Both sides have a couple of aces in the proverbial hole. One is air-mobile units, the term including airborne and helicopter mobile units. The idea is that regardless if they move to their destination via parachute landings or helicopter insertion, it comes to about the same thing in game terms, and rather than bog down players with details, it was easier to treat these units as a single type. Airmobile units proved vital during playtest sessions. They give players a shot at vertical envelopment. They also allow you to get troops up front when you need them, whether to reinforce an attack or to cover a flank which suddenly broke open, the proverbial fire brigade.

Airpower is similarly useful. I portrayed air force units as modified land units which can fly from bases. This was in part to keep it simple. But it also reflects the "range and lethality" of modern weapons systems. The idea is that ordnance is going to be delivered to the target, regardless if from ground based multiple rocket launchers, helicopter fired wire guided missiles, or aircraft dropped precision guided munitions. Rather than write separate rules for each type of weapons systems I integrated them into a common combat system. Call it design for effect, it worked in laytesting and that is what counts.

There are no navies in the game, at least not overtly. I figured that for the period of the game, both the Russian and Chinese fleets would cancel each other out. However, both sides do have a limited ability to make amphibious landings.

Order of Battle

As mentioned, both sides can build corps and break them down into divisions (Chinese) or brigades (Russians). The breakdown-buildup function serves several purposes. One is that it shows the advantages of concentration for command control, logistics, and fire-power. A corps is stronger and generally faster than its component units. This allowed a number of other things within the design.

For example, certain combat results force corps to break down into component units. This represents loss of cohesion. Since you cannot rebuild units until your following reorganization phase, it provides a period of vulnerability, especially if the enemy exploits a second impulse (hyperwar units again) to pursue and destroy separate divisions and brigades.

On the other hand, the breakdown system shows the resilience of large formations. Other combat results will eliminate non-corps units, but only cause a corps to breakdown. What this all adds up to is the use of a single game system to model several different realworld functions.

Evaluating unit combat factors was a bit tricky. Generally, the Russians are a bit faster and a bit stronger than the Chinese. The Russians have more practical combat experience from Afghanistan and the Caucasus. Yes, I know, the Russians also have considerable shortfalls in their military, but combat experience counts for something. The Chinese armed forces have not engaged in a real shooting war since their 1979 incursion into Vietnam, and their performance was less than sterling in that fracas.

Russian air capabilities generally are superior to the Chinese because the former have more fourth generation warplanes than the latter. They also can project their airmobile units farther because the Russian airborne has something of a proven track record while the Chinese are still an unknown quantity. The idea is that the movement factors represent not only how far air transport can fly, but the overall ability to project airmobile troops in a theater of operations.

Zones of control are strong, stopping movement and forcing combat if enemy units are in contact. This reflects—again—the range and lethality of modern weapons systems. The idea is that if you are close to the foe you will be engaged by drones, long range artillery fires, helicopters, and all the rest of the arsenal. If you want to avoid this, then keep a respectable No Man's Land between your forces and the other guy's.

Hyperwar and WMD

Players also get Hyperwar markers. These represent operational and strategic level assets ranging from cyberwar to cruise missile attacks. Players can use the markers for two general functions. One is to give a non-hyperwar unit a one phase hyperwar qualification. Another is to make Strategic Hyperwar Attacks, representing attacks on high-level enemy C4I (command control communications computer intelligence) systems. Results for these attacks include “crashing” enemy units, costing it both its zone of control and any

hyperwar capability. Another result allows you to eliminate hyperwar and WMD strikes from the enemy's available pool.


Which brings me to WMD—weapons of mass destruction. These represent tactical nuclear weapons, chemical warfare, fuel air explosives, and lots of other nastiness. Each player has a limited number. These strikes can attack enemy units on the map, potentially causing the destruction of units. They also may contaminate hexes. One thing we found in playtesting was that WMD were useful for taking out enemy strongpoints, such as heavily defended cities. But there was a downside: the potential for contamination might also make it impossible for a player to exploit a victory because units cannot enter such hexes. I built the grisly effects into the WMD table with a result for *blowback*, a result giving the enemy some free reinforcements. The idea is that the political repercussions of WMD ratchets up the support for the enemy's war effort from domestic and international sources.

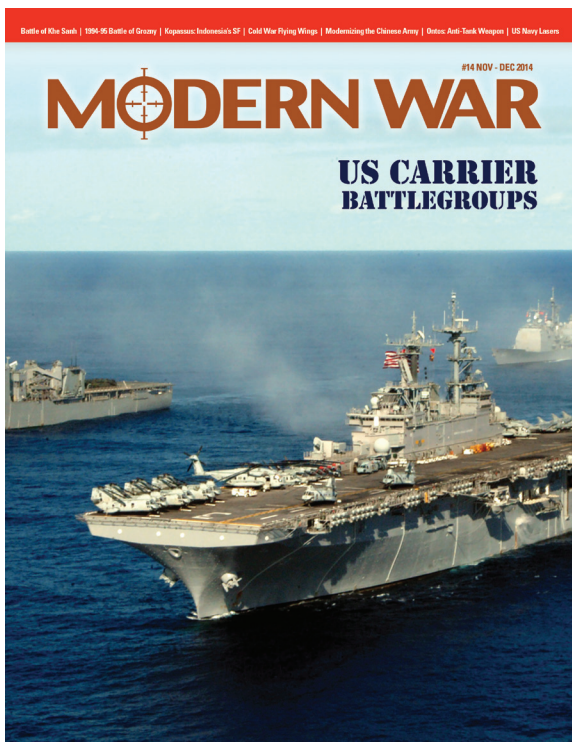
Scenarios

There are three scenarios. The first shows the current situation, war breaking out without any mobilization. The second and third have both sides mobilized. An optional rule can bring in Mongolia, North Korea, and even the US-Coalition, as well as accounting for the global situation and domestic upsets within Russia and China.

One thing I had to account for was each power's reinforcements. Players begin with an opaque container of units. Scenarios will give each player a designated number of random picks from their pool. I went with this randomized process to reflect the bigger political situation. While there may be official mobilization schedules, both countries may just not be able to make them work under fire. The Russian military goes through periods of internal chaos and just because units are on the TO/E does not mean they are ready for combat. While the Chinese may appear to be more organized, they have yet to test their system under combat conditions. Aside from all that, I wanted to account for the possibility that both sides may be engaged in combat operations off the map, or have to divert forces against outside intervention or internal dissent. Rather than have rules for all these political-military factors, it was much easier to work them into a single provision for picking reinforcements at random.

Onward

The game has a very chess like feel to it. Units have substantial qualitative differences, some being able to move across the map, others being static but vital for defense. You can't attack everywhere but you can make decisive moves if you set them up correctly. Victory is determined by seizure of critical economic targets, including industrial cities and petroleum pipelines, and by destroying enemy units. I'm considering more games in the series, including a multi-power fight over Central Asia (Great Game II) and perhaps even a new look at the Gulf Wars of the last couple decades. So stay tuned. 



US Carrier BattleGroups Issue #14

By Joseph Miranda

We've been doing a lot of purpose-designed solitaire wargames here at DG, including *US Carrier Battlegroups (Carrier Solo)*, which I just wrapped up. It deals with hypothetical naval action in the North Atlantic during an even more hypothetical Warsaw-Pact-versus-NATO conflict some time in the early 1980s. You the player are in command of US Navy carrier task force built around a *Nimitz* class aircraft carrier, plus assorted aircraft and specialized crew. Soviet forces are run by the game system, and include warships, aircraft and anti-ship missiles. All this is in a realm in which electronic warfare and other modern technologies are in the forefront.

Needless to say, all these factors could make for a daunting project. My approach to *Carrier Solo* was to keep things as simple as possible. The design's premise is that you are seeing things from the combat information center (CIC) of the carrier. You're concerned mainly with the tactical and operational picture on your screens—not the entire Sixth Fleet. As a result, I could simplify many game procedures.

A major obstacle in designing solitaire games is that you have to account for the position of enemy forces. I faced a similar situation when designing *Goeben Solitaire (S&T 287)*, covering the opening days of World War I in the Mediterranean. The solution was in having enemy forces appear only when they would interact with your ship. Remember, the game shows you the running of an individual task force, *not* the entire theater of operations.

In *Carrier Solo*, Soviet forces are shown in two ways. There are one to three Soviet battlegroup (BG) markers initially deployed on the map. These represent the position of possible Soviet forces determined by your intelligence sources. In the course of the game, you can find out

what these BG comprise by doing intelligence operations (the subtle way) or running your task force into them (the not so subtle way).

Other Soviet naval units operate beyond your intelligence horizon and show up as a result of *Incident* markers. At the completion of a your move, you pick a number of Incident markers equal to the current Alert Level. The Alert Level is based on the overall Soviet awareness of the threat that your task force presents to them. This in turn is influenced by combat (making the level go up), and conducting electronic warfare to spoof Soviet intelligence gathering (making the level go down).

Each Incident marker generates one of many randomized events. Some are beneficial, such as the fleet high command dispatching reinforcements to you. Others may cause Soviet BG to move, or generate additional Soviet forces which attack your task force.

Combat starts by determining the Soviet presence. If the combat resulted from you running into a Soviet BG, you reveal the units in its holding box and go to the Tactical Subroutine. If combat resulted from an Incident marker, you draw Soviet units from a pool. These Soviets may have come from anywhere—a sudden counterattack, over the horizon forces launching anti-ship missiles, whatever, the point is you the player don't have to track the position of every last Soviet unit in the north seas. Since you are seeing this from the CIC, it doesn't make a difference.

What does make a difference is how you fight the ensuing battle using the Tactical Subroutine. You set up both side's units on a Tactical Display, then engage in rounds of anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine fires. The Tactical Display is divided into two sections, an Inner Zone and an Outer Zone. I don't want to go into too much detail here, but it does model actual naval tactics insofar as a defender can commit units to the Outer Zone to stop or disrupt intruders before they are close enough to hit the carrier. The attacker can come in waves, and sometimes it is useful to use aircraft and missiles to clear the way for surface units.

Offensively, you can launch air units and cruise missiles. The units move to the target, engage in combat, then surviving aircraft return. Missiles, of course, are always expended.

Combat execution is a two stage process. You throw a number of dice equal to a unit's factor, hitting on a "5" or "6." If you do get a hit, you roll on a second table based on the specific type of target (aircraft, surface units, subs, etc.). Each type has different range of outcomes. You can cause damage, and a single point of damage will cut all ship system values in half. Multiple hits will destroy a ship, and there are some specialized results generating massive explosions. Unlike *Goeben Solo*, there is no distinction between gunnery or propulsion hits. Again, this is due to the changes in naval weaponry and architecture.

Modern naval weapons can be devastating. My analysis of the Falklands War showed that even a single hit by an anti-ship missile could disrupt and even cripple a warship. This is in part due to vulnerability of ship systems, since the kind of heavy armor used in the world wars is no longer in vogue. (As an aside, post-World War II analysis of naval actions showed that armor did not make much difference when it came to ship defense. It actually made more sense to harden critical areas than add massive armor belts which increased weight for little return.)



Victory in combat can affect your leadership ratings, boosting or degrading future combat performance. It's something you have to consider, and sometimes it's useful to engage in a battle simply to up your combat experience.

Naval Logistics

As is the case in naval or any other sort of warfare, logistics are big in *Carrier Solo*. Each scenario gives you Mission Orders. There are seven possible missions among them clearing the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap, attacking the Soviet naval bases around Murmansk, intruding into the Baltic for a joint amphibious operation, and even landing SEAL teams on remote Arctic islands for classified missions. And yes, there is a mission involving a hunt for a Soviet nuclear ballistic missile submarine before it gets loose in the North Atlantic.

Each mission will give you a designated number of logistics points (LP). You can expend LP to buy aircraft squadrons, specialized crew, and enhancements to your carrier.

US air units represent F-14s, venerable F-4s, advanced F/A-18s, A-6s, A-7s, and S-3s. Specialized carrier aircraft, such as electronic warfare and refuelers, are also available. You can even call in land

based aircraft such as P-3. But the better the aircraft, the more it is going to cost. An F-14 costs two LP as opposed to an F-4's one LP.

Special crew include electronic warfare personnel, damage control, flight deck, Marine detachments, and others. These give enhancements to various game functions. For example, a flight deck crew increased your ability to launch and recovery aircraft, and repair damaged aircraft. Since everything costs LP, and you never have enough to buy everything, you have to figure out your priorities and buy accordingly.

You roll on a table to generate the number of cruisers, destroyers, frigates and replenishment ships assigned to your task force. Some of the escorts include *California* class nuclear powered cruisers, *Spruance* destroyers, and the new Aegis. Each type has its own advantages, and you have to consider the tradeoff between various combat and electronic warfare (EW) capabilities. Additional LP can be expended for extra fuel and ammunition reloads. You can also buy Tomahawk cruise missiles and assign them to missile capable escorts.

The game map covers the North, Greenland, Barents and Baltic Seas, from Iceland to Murmansk and Riga. Movement is via navigation lines. Each space equals about 60 nautical miles, and each turn twelve hours. You can move your task force at either cruise speed or burn fuel and go to maximum speed. The faster your move, the more likely you will complete a scenario on time, but fuel can be a tricky thing because you can also burn it to gain a tactical edge when it comes to combat. The game has numerous tradeoffs such as this, which makes for some real decision making, and just like the real world you never have everything you need.

Ships & Planes

Each unit in *Carrier Solo* is rated for anti-air, anti-surface, anti-submarine, EW, defense and movement. When developing the ratings, I considered several things. One was the actual hardware capabilities. But there were also doctrinal and non-material factors. For example, US warships generally have a higher defense strength than their Soviet counterparts due to superior US Navy damage control procedures. The Navy has several wars worth of experience in this area, while the Soviet Navy has not caught up. On top of this, Soviet tactics call for all-out offensive action to sink US ships, especially carriers. I gave their ships a little more punch than might be warranted by the actual weapons performance. In the game, Soviet warships can be dangerous, but they tend to not last very long in combat.

Another factor is electronic warfare. This was a bit tricky. In the late 1970s, the Soviets seemed to have put considerable effort into their EW capabilities. For the game, I gave them a rough parity with most US units, but not the more advanced ones such as the F/A-18. The US does get specialized electronic warfare aircraft, however, and these can make a major difference. The presence of EW aircraft can give you an edge in determining who has the bounce when it comes to combat.

The design caused me to take a new look at naval capabilities of the US and USSR for this era. Many of the surface warships are actually air defense and anti-submarine warfare platforms, such as the Soviet *Kresta* cruisers. Much of the anti-surface warfare power is in the submarines, which can be truly devastating. Of course, US naval airpower is also quite powerful.

Strengths also were evaluated according to planned use. For example, US F-14s have high anti-air combat strengths, but low anti-surface event though they could carry considerable bombloads. The doctrine for this era was that they would defend the task force from enemy aerial intruders, both aircraft and missiles. The Navy even developed a specialized air-to-air missile for this mission, the Phoenix. Rather than add in an additional sub-system for aircraft weaponization, I just portrayed each unit in the configuration in which it would be most likely used.

The Soviets have a *Kiev* class light aircraft carrier. Modeling it was a bit tricky. I kicked around several ideas about showing their air group (Yak-38s and assorted ASW helicopters). I finally used the simplest solution, building the squadrons into the *Kiev's* anti-air and anti-submarine values. Another interesting thing is that the *Kiev* carriers' helicopters were loaded with electronics, so I upped the unit's EW factor accordingly.

Naval Campaigning

You can link the game's scenarios together into one grand campaign where you have to complete a respectable majority of the seven missions to win. This can be daunting, but each time you accomplish a mission you gain a bonus such as additional logistics points or reinforcements. You can also receive Top Guns, superior fighter pilots who give your air units enhanced combat capabilities.

The campaign game includes an option for adding a second carrier to your task force. This makes for some considerable naval power. To keep things balanced, the Soviets get additional forces if you take this option. Just for completeness, there is another option for an Iowa class battleship. Needless to say, this adds considerable firepower to your task force.

We conducted the first playtest for **Carrier Solo** in January 2013. While the game is technically solitaire, it does open itself to team play. Wargame veterans Ty Bomba, Chris Perello, and Joe Youst all took command and staff positions on the task force, with me advising. The mission was to attack Murmansk, and the game began with a lively discussion of which aircraft and crew to purchase. Then it was off across Norwegian waters toward the Barents Sea.

The task force ran into some stray Soviet units generated via Incident marker, and blew them out of both the water and air. Everyone's morale shot up and there was some concern that the game was a little too easy. Then, off Narvik, the task force ran into a Soviet battlegroup containing both the *Kiev* carrier and a *Kirov* class battlecruiser. Squadrons were frantically launched from the flight deck, and every cruise missile to be had was fired in the direction of the foe. The battle was hard fought, but the Soviet warships were sent to the bottom. Alas, several USN escorts also

went down, or were forced to withdraw to base because of damage. The carrier survived mostly intact, though it did take a couple of hull hits. Afterwards, everyone assembled in the CIC to figure out a slightly less aggressive strategy! The scenario did have elements of role-playing, as things played out as if this were a techno-thriller movie. ❖

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