

This article appeared in Volume 20, Number 4, of the GENERAL magazine. It gives a good overview of the game changes that occurred with the 1975 revision. There are a couple of rule errors that Avalon Hill allowed to pass unedited. Note of some of these is made in the appropriate area. A number of errors also occurs on the charts and in the accompanying text. I have tried to faithfully reproduce the charts and have not attempted to correct those errors. Whether the errors are attributed to Mr. Harmon or to the print-setting/editing process is unknown. Just be alert that rote acceptance of setups and processes may lead to gaming difficulties. (Should be some Surgeon General's warning here.) The minor country colors are carried into the ADC2 game and the ADC2 minor country unit counters have the base color prescribe by this article. Letter to the Editor corrections of Mr. Harmon's article are provided separately.

A Commander's Notebook: BLITZKRIEG

By Robert D. Harmon

Mr. Harmon's piece has been languishing in our files for some time. It struck me as too comprehensive an analysis for long-time BLITZKRIEG players, and too excellent an introduction for novices, to remain unseen there.

BLITZKRIEG appeared in 1965, a time when the wargaming hobby was much smaller than today, when board wargames were few and D-elim still ruled the battlefield. Contemporary accounts hailed BLITZKRIEG as unsurpassed in realism -- it did introduce partial elimination, one of many innovations. It opened the floodgates to a host of land wargames of increasing complexity and originality. Though many years and wargames separate then and now, BLITZKRIEG doesn't quite fade into the hobby's infancy, for BLITZKRIEG marked its end.

The game has appeal yet. This is partly nostalgia -- BLITZKRIEG introduced many to wargaming and for others -- myself included -- kindled a life-spanning interest. The game's abstract setting is also appealing, for the map and orders of battle are hypothetical, and players can approach them without preconceptions. Indeed, BLITZKRIEG is the only current wargame (TACTICS II notwithstanding) still presenting a fictional scenario -- and combining it with today's art of war. Even the science-fiction and fantasy games don't address that.

Finally, BLITZKRIEG '75 (as now revised) is still one of the best wargame experiences around. The fictional board showcases pure strategy and combined-arms tactics -- a textbook presentation. BLITZKRIEG is still one of the few ground-warfare games that address air strategy. The elimination procedure is one of the least cumbersome (note that many later wargames returned to some form of total-elimination). All of the complexities of modern warfare -- logistics, air-ground cooperation, amphibious operations, armored breakthrough, vertical envelopment, combined-arms tactics, et al -- are presented in a unified, manageable format. Thus, BLITZKRIEG is possibly the largest -- or at least, the most comprehensive -- of the non-monster wargames.

Finally, the wargamer has freedom of action over a continental area, with fewer restrictions than *WAR AND PEACE* or *THIRD REICH*. New fronts and new offensives can be opened with no restrictions -- other than those posed by geography and the enemy.

This article will examine *BLITZKRIEG '75*, which many wargamers will find to be much more dynamic, and much different in play from the 1965 edition that many remember. The discussion is divided into various "Critical Issues" -- continuing the "Commander's Notebook" approach. Each Critical Issue, addressing an important event or feature, will review particular considerations in theory and play in bite-size portions.

A note on terminology: Great Blue and Big Red are clearly marked on the map, of course. For brevity, each minor country is similarly named. The large country on Blue's eastern border is Yellow. Yellow shares the Great Koufax Desert with White, to the east. White, of course, borders Big Red -- a distinction it shares with Black, to the south. The long, narrow country west of Black is Green, which is between the lake and the sea. The country in the center of the map is Brown. Finally, the peninsula containing the River Sparling is, of course, part of the Great Blue itself.

CRITICAL ISSUE #1: RULE CHANGES

This discussion both introduces *BLITZKRIEG '75* to veteran wargamers and serves to spotlight key game procedures for all readers. Most of the rule changes are fundamental.

Attrition Tables: The Basic Game Attrition Table (BGAT) remains the same -- using D-elim for novices sake. The BGAT explanations, however, redefine exchanges as one-unit-per-side elimination. As in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, the defense no longer loses all units in an exchange, and terrain--especially doubled factoring -- no longer applies here. Retreated units still observe stacking restrictions, and cannot retreat through fully-stacked hexes.

The Tournament Game Attrition Table (TGAT) is much the same as in *BLITZKRIEG '65*. BGAT retreat restrictions are applied to the TGAT. The owning player conducts unit advances and retreats, as usual. Also -- a new clarification advances and retreats must adhere to the movement rules, which involve the new Zone of Control rules (see below) as well. The terrain table on the BGAT/TGAT card is considerably clarified, and movement effects are conveniently introduced. Terrain effects -- movement and combat -- are much the same as in the old game, but armor and air assault units now have DOUBLE movement in desert hexes.

BASIC GAME

City Control: *BLITZKRIEG '75* now requires that any city is unfriendly unless continuously occupied, except for those in the player's homeland. This is determined at the start of the player's turn, and enemy ZOC must not be present. The supply rules in the Optional Rules forbid supply lines through unfriendly cities, so occupation forces will demand consideration.

Movement: Ground movement remains the same in theory, with dramatic changes in rates. One innovation: Doubled desert movement for armor and air assault units. Air transport rules are also changed; Airdropped units can only move *one hex* after landing (not at all if the drop zone was in mountain or forest hexes), instead of the full ground movement once allowed. Air transport of ground units is now restricted to these maximums: Four (division-size) units, 40 hex distance, and NO armor or artillery. Air transported units are now required to start the turn in a friendly city. One critical ambiguity: Rule 9.4 begins, "When being *air transported*, airborne and air-assault units may be airdropped within 20 hexes . . . instead of 40 hexes" (emphasis mine). This implies that this "air transport" must come out of the four-unit maximum, a question not ad-

ressed in any Question Box after January 1975. This is realistic, as transport aircraft usually are designed to drop their cargoes, as well as merely carry them. A real-life instance was Soviet use of Antonov transports to supply the Arab powers in the October 1973 conflict-until the airlift was suddenly halted October 23. Washington concluded that an airborne invasion of the war zone was being readied, and a crisis resulted.

Zones of Control. ZOCs still require combat for units stopped therein. However, ZOC movement effects are dramatically alerted, for armor and air assault units may IGNORE any ZOCs -- other than those of enemy armor or air assault units -- both in the movement phase, and advancing/retreating after combat. **[While armor and air assault units may move through infantry type unit ZOCs, they cannot retreat or advance through any enemy ZOC.]** The implications are enormous. Most sectors -- indeed, most stacks -- are going to require armor close at hand. A second reform is "engagement." Non-armored units -- specifically, airborne, artillery, and infantry -- may NOT voluntarily leave ZOCs. This means that (hitherto) mediocre results on the TGAT -- i.e., no retreat by either side -- may lead to ruination for units so engaged, for combat is still mandatory. A moving player can be given the ugly choice of reinforcing a losing battle or leaving units to their fate, sometimes at less than the 1-6 minimum. Planning for retreats is now a serious challenge.

A new clarification: ZOCs extend into all six surrounding hexes, to include sea hexes.

Stacking: Another major change multiplying the effect of the weakened ZOCs. The 12-factor maximum is gone; instead, the limit is three units (Tournament Game substitute units equaling one-half unit). The effect on tactics is considerable, as six -- and eight -- factor armored units may now outweigh defending infantry, which still stack as four-factor divisions. Given the poor ZOCs of non-armored (soft) units, attacking armor will face an enemy that will be spread thinly.

The concentrated firepower now allowed places great emphasis on the principle of mass. Further, unit quality -- particularly that of elite units such as Marine or Guard divisions -- can be fully expressed now that the 12-factor ceiling is gone.

Finally, armored units now pose a triple threat -- their strength, their mobility (enhanced by the ZOC rules), and their ability to tie up adjacent, soft units. Any retreat before armor will degenerate into a rout-unless armor covers the retreat.

Combat: Much the same. Each player ends movement with a combat phase; combat is mandatory for all units in ZOCs as of that phase, including armor; defending stacks must be attacked as one entity; odds below 1-6 are forbidden.

Victory Conditions: Modified. The winner must still eliminate all enemy units, but now must have 14 units left; or, he or she may occupy all enemy home cities, but must now do so for two consecutive turns to win; or, the winner must now hold 35 + city hexes on Turn 15, not 25 cities as before. Anything else is still a stalemate, redefined as a mutual loss comparable to 1918.

BASIC GAME OPTIONAL RULES

Sea Movement: Ground units continue moving at sea on a zone-to-zone basis. However, each side may now have ten units, not 40 factors, at sea. Landing at friendly ports costs one movement factor, but movement inland is otherwise unhindered.

A major new twist is the introduction of inland ports. These reintroduce four cities into the game -- VV25 being particularly important as it gives Red access to Sea Zones A and B. Inland ports can, of course, be closed by unfriendly units or ZOCs on their estuaries -- however, ANY port can be closed by sea-hex ZOCs as well. For instance, D4 could be closed by a unit on the peninsula to the west, or a unit at G13 or G15 could close the entire west gulf. **[Not true for D4. AH has ruled that the board edge sea hexes extend out indefinitely, therefore movement of units at sea is not restricted.]**

Invasions: Few changes. Rule 20.34 refers to elimination of all assaulting units attacking from sea hexes; presumably this means any unit unable to advance into a vacated beach hex, as rule 20.35 indicates. No movement bonus can be used on landing, a clarification but no real change.

Automatic Victory: AVs remain the same (5-1 surrounded or 7-1 outright) and continue to take

effect during the movement phase. Aving units advance four hexes after *all* other combat, a slight change from the '65 rules. No mention is made here or later of any AV by air units, a serious development, as any rear-area AVs must now involve airdropped or amphibious units.

Strategic Movement: An innovation in the '75 rules. A four-movement-factor bonus is allowed, for any units staying out of enemy ZOCs for a given turn. This compensates for armor and artillery units' lack of air transportability, and helps expedite the arrival of reinforcements.

Combat Supply: The *BLITZKRIEG* '75 supply rules are entirely new. The cumbersome 12-factor-per-city-hex ceiling is gone; any home city can supply any number of units as long as the supply lines are unbroken. Occupied cities are conduits, not sources, and must be kept friendly or the roads will be cut.

As before, supply can be traced from the sea through friendly ports; and, in any event, supply routes may leave roads only in the last ten hexes overland. Beach supply is now limited to ten hexes inland, and to ten units maximum (not 40 factors). Beach hexes have to be kept occupied, like cities (unless, presumably, you invaded your own country for some reason).

The most serious change in the supply rules is regarding non-supply which no longer eliminates units. Unsupplied units do lose strategic movement and advance-after-combat; attack factors and movement capabilities are halved. Even then, isolated units have some consolation: the air transport capability can be diverted into supply airlift, one factor to supply each unit (excluding artillery and armor, a plus for the lowly infantry). This can aid a breakout and certainly compel an enemy to reduce pockets -- which still defend at full strength.

The new supply rules have an ultimate, strategic effect -- since cities no longer have a cumulative effect on supply, wide conquest is no longer needed to support larger armies. Players' offensives can be initially narrow, and escalated at convenience. Further, the need for unbroken contact with the homeland is emphasized, and flanking drives become more threatening.

NOTE: Most of the Basic-Optional Rules were moved from the '65 Tournament Level. A new

level of rules is thus added, for ease of transition by new players. The progression to the Tournament Game is less difficult.

TOURNAMENT GAME

Combat: As in *BLITZKRIEG* '65, the TGAT is introduced. However, the TGAT is accompanied by a new and bloody Barrage and Bombardment Table (BBT). The BBT itself is nasty -- three artillery divisions (24 factors) could kill from two to ten factors without direct loss to themselves, as there are no attacker losses. Artillery may use the BBT at two hexes' distance -- greatly enhancing this combat arm.

The BBT can be used, once per target, prior to a TGAT attack. The possible advance is limited to one hex but the result of this, and increased stacking, is heavy defense losses and a way of breaking bottlenecks like the BB31 - EE34 isthmus. This is another lesson in the need for combined arms.

Two further BBT constraints: First, grounded air units also can be attacked by artillery on the BBT prior to ground units in the hex; second, and more important, *the BBT can't achieve AVs*.

Net result: A new mode of attack is provided, an alternative to an armored blitz -- less speedy, but no less bloody. This sort of offensive, marked by intense artillery preparation, was and is prominent in Soviet doctrine.

Substitute Units: As in the '65 rules, units are reduced factor by factor, and surviving factors are replaced by same-type brigades (or air squadrons). A new refinement -- substitutes are stacked and transported as half units (equaling half a division or wing "unit"). Substitution is limited to the substitute units on hand, and can include smaller, inactivated divisions.

A major limitation, newly introduced, allows substitutes to recombine into larger units only at the end of the movement phase. These units must be in the same hex, must be the same type, and may *not* be in a ZOC or otherwise attacking. (The '65 rules said *anytime*).

Rangers: Rangers are considerably enhanced, and now constitute a true elite. They are no longer subject to the one invasion limit, and may land anywhere regardless of concurrent amphibious

or (other) Ranger landings. Rangers can, of course, land in any coastal hex, and may also move to sea from any coastal hex (though not in the same turn), provided enemy ZOCs don't interfere.

The Rangers have been considerably augmented in the 1975 rules, with new capabilities. Rangers may invade any lake hexes, if they start in a lake port. Better yet, Rangers are air-droppable, and can serve as airborne troops.

Replacements: Now pegged at six substitute counters per turn, depending on availability. This is a great improvement over the four-factor rate in the '65 version, and the restrictions have changed considerably. Half the reinforcements on a given turn must be ground troops -- not less than one infantry, not more than one airborne or ranger ("elite") substitute. The other half must be air units -- though selection is left up to the player. One of these air units can be converted into augmentation of air transport by one half-unit capacity, permanently.

Aircraft replacements are affected by the number of aircraft cities in operation, and must be placed one per city (three are designated for each major power). Since aircraft must constitute half the turn's replacements, ground force replacement is affected by control of these cities, and accumulation of replacements becomes difficult at these rates. **[Avalon Hill has ruled that loss of control of aircraft cities does not affect the ground unit replacements. If, for example, only one aircraft city is under a player's control, that player would still get three ground unit replacements but only one air unit replacement.]**

Minor Countries: These resist invaders much the same in the '65 and '75 rules; the Minor City Reduction Table is identical. Some new changes: Minor cities now have an infantry-type ZOC; invading forces lose four factors in ANY turn that all cities of a country aren't garrisoned, and an invading player is defined as an "aggressor" (his opponent is a "liberator" to that country). **[Not exactly true. Two factors are lost by an aggressor at the beginning of the turn to trace supply into or through an unconquered minor country. Two factors are lost at the end of the turn due to guerrilla action in a minor country if the aggressor does not occupy all cities. On an invasion turn, the aggressor**

could at most lose only two factors due to guerrilla action. On subsequent turns, the aggressor may choose to leave his units out of supply in that country to save the two factor loss -- of course the attack and movement factors of those units would be halved.]

The minor country rules now reflect the full impact of partisan warfare. Failure to secure all cities will cause a player to lose four factors inside that country -- two due to direct guerrilla action, and two more (according to the rules) as a price for keeping supply lines open. Continual garrisons are vital to prevent this, as the cities are not only loyal to the "liberator," but break supply lines if unoccupied. Further, once the liberator occupies some of that country's cities, the aggressor starts losing more units; logical, as partisan activity will escalate as the Liberation begins. Violated countries will welcome liberation units, including aircraft, whether the cities were reduced or not (another innovation).

Bomber Aircraft: Air units are employed under new rules. Three air units may now stack per city hex, over a maximum of three more ground units. Two air half-units or one full air unit may go to sea beside the ten ground units allowed. Seaborne air units are limited to TAC or FTR, as before. Unsupplied air units may not attack; bomber units attack at DOUBLE factor at half-range or less.

The old Strategic Air Attack table is gone -- strategic bombing is done on the BBT (although separately from artillery attacks). The use of the BBT means that attacks are now calculated by attack factors, not odds. AVs are no longer possible; ground attack after strategic (BBT) bombardment is, under rule 25.3. Tactical bombing is done as before, except that half or better of TGAT attacker losses *must* be aviation. Tactical bombers must now match defender factoring, or river defenses will not be undoubled.

Finally, the new rules omit mention of city-bombing -- these missions appear later in the Tournament-Optional Rules. The missions shown in the standard Tournament Game -- strategic and tactical -- apply to ground units only.

Bombers greatly enhanced power (courtesy of the BBT), and increased tactical air losses, stand out in the new rules. This helps bring *BLITZ-*

KRIEG forward into the Eighties, from the World War II version seen in the '65 rules. Modern aviation has become much more hard-hitting and flexible, particularly against ground units; lighter, close-support aircraft face greater hazards in turn, due to divisional air-defense artillery and even hand-held missiles.

TOURNAMENT GAME OPTIONAL RULES

Air Combat: Fighters are introduced; instead of mere interception, five different missions are described, to include strafing of airfields and even ground forces. There will be more on this in Critical Issue #8; for now, let's say that the utilization of fighters is vastly improved over the old rules.

Additional Bombing Missions: City-bombing is greatly refined, but meaningless without the Critical Resources Rules. Air interdiction is redefined and is now performed by TAC or FTR, not SAC. Bombers can also selectively attack air-bases, ports, and industries. Night bombing can also be used to avoid interception.

A note on air-unit stacking, now that the air rules have been covered: The three-unit maximum means that up to 22 air factors could be based in one city hex. Conversely, breakdown of these units could lead to space problems, as two one-factor squadrons take up as much space as one eight-factor wing. This is less of a problem with TAC and FTR, which can make the transition from four-factor units to two-factor half-units with little stress.

The three-unit stacking allows more use of TAC at the front. As TAC can also perform airfield-bombing and interdiction missions, besides ground support, it is much more useful from land or sea bases.

Weather: Considerably improved and explained. Actual weather is mentioned on the chart, not just the results. Clear weather is now automatic during the first seven turns; provisions are made for weather after Turn 15, indefinitely.

Naval Ascendancy: A new and brilliant innovation. The ability to invade, or trace supplies through sea zones, is now affected by ground forces (and inherent escorts, obviously) at sea, as well as port control, presence of land and carrier-based air, previous-turn invasions. Thus, the

mutual effects of surface escorts, aircraft, nearby naval ports (and the patrol units they would harbor), and amphibious task forces are represented in a neat, abstract format. Further, invasions far from base -- particularly in the enemy homeland -- are mitigated by control of intervening sea zones. Blue, for instance, would find invasion of Red's east coast to be highly difficult.

Nuclear Capacity: Omitted in *BLITZKRIEG '75*.

Critical Resources: New, and with the aircraft industry rules, constituting "economic" rules for *BLITZKRIEG '75*. In effect, every home country city (and some minor-country cities as well) now have some form of critical industry. Aircraft cities were named and discussed in the standard Tournament Game; this rule assigns petro-chemical, naval, or basic industries to the remainder. The Additional Bombing Missions rule set bomb damage at one turn maximum (a step down from *BLITZKRIEG '65*), but loss of cities to enemy ground troops is obviously more permanent.

This rule is subtle in its effects, but, in the aggregate, can destroy a major power. The effects take hold as soon as the enemy enters a player's home cities, and effectively replaces the 12-factor-per-city rule in the old game.

Addendum: One salient feature: The game is now 15 turns long, not open-ended as the Time Record Card still (erroneously) indicates. Players may extend the game beyond that; but with the greatly enhanced power of armored units and the BBT, this extension may not be needed.

Thus, the '75 rules. They not only brought *BLITZKRIEG* equal to state-of-the-art, but also make for a game that is comprehensive and yet manageable -- monster-game concepts on a playable level. Finally, the new rules bring *BLITZKRIEG* forward from the Second World War -- accurately representing strategy on the deadlier battlefields of the '80s.

CRITICAL ISSUE #2: THE TACTICS OF RETREAT

The new rules have greatly increased *BLITZKRIEG* attrition. Artillery, aircraft, armor, and even minor countries are more deadly, with the Barrage and Bombardment Table contributing to much of the carnage.

The Tournament Game Attrition Table still offers the most potential for bloodshed. To be sure, direct losses on the TGAT still remain light (attackers lose two factors maximum even at 1-6, as against four defending factors max at 6-1). Also, AVs aren't likely against large stacks. But, retreating units are still **TOTALLY ELIMINATED** if retreat is impossible. This was, and remains the deadliest aspect of *BLITZKRIEG*.

Five factors contribute to this:

- First, and newest, factor in retreat tactics is armored immunity to soft-unit ZOCs. Armor can potentially advance through the smallest gaps.
- Second, units can advance over AVs, directly into the rear of other enemy units.
- Third, units can advance after combat and surround units still to be fought. This can also ruin engaged units.
- Fourth, "elite" units (airborne, air assault, Ranger) or a landing force could outflank an enemy by sea and air.
- Fifth, air interdiction could also provide vertical envelopment.

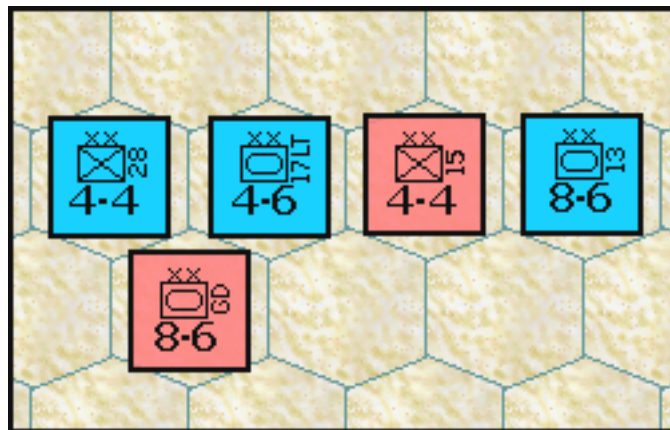


ILLUSTRATION 1: An example of the first factor is shown above. The 15th Infantry has been bypassed, and can't retreat. Should the 13th Armored be attacked in turn, it could retreat past the 15th even if the Guards Division counterattacks from the other side. **[Armor, even though it can move through Infantry ZOCs during its movement phase, cannot retreat or advance after combat through an enemy's ZOC.]**

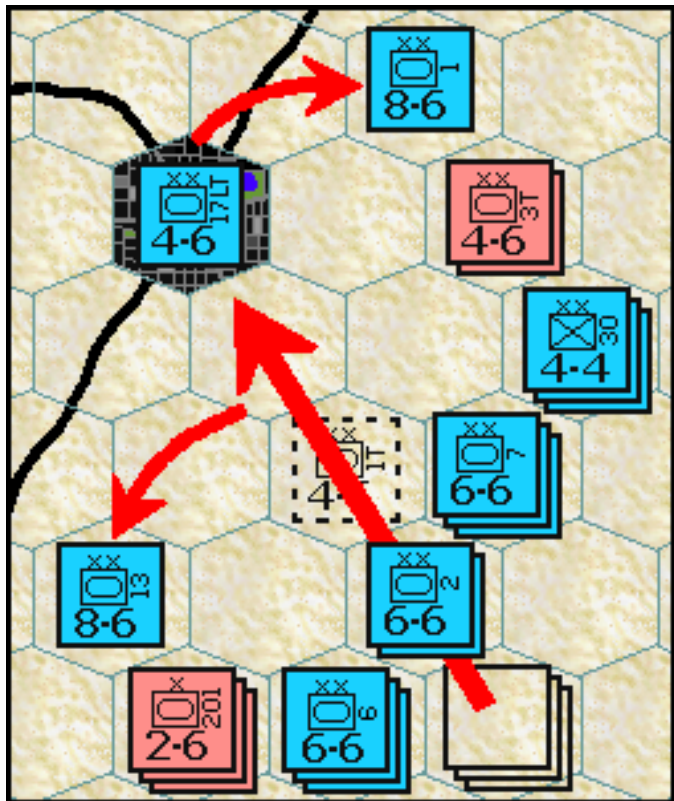


ILLUSTRATION 2: An example of the second possibility -- AV -- in action. A gap has been torn where a solid line once existed, and the defenders are in trouble.

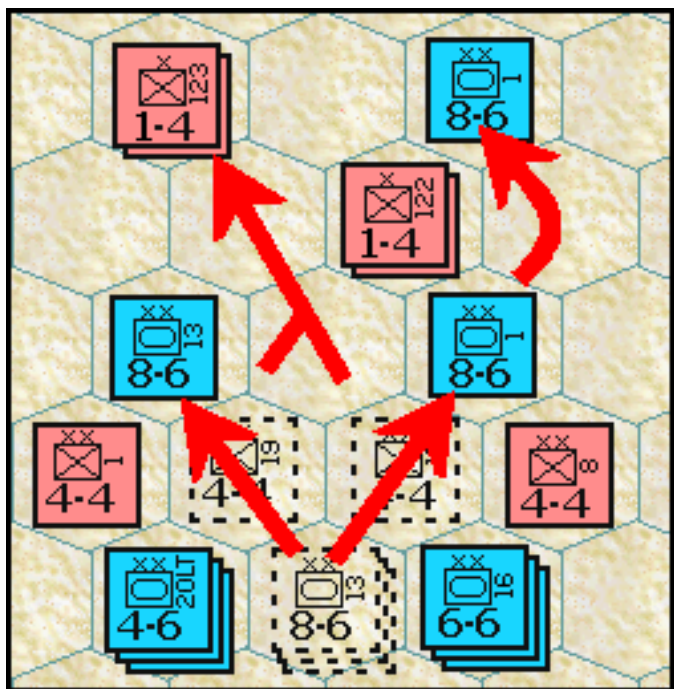


ILLUSTRATION 3: Advance after combat is quite effective with armor, given ZOC considerations, and it at its best if the four hex advance shown took place FIRST. Subsequent battles would now involve surrounded defenders. [As reported before, armor and air-assault units advancing after combat must stop in when they enter an enemy's zone of control (21.3). In the example shown, the Blue 1, 9, and 13 Armor must stop in the enemy's vacated hex because of ZOCs imposed by Red's 1 and 8 Infantry.]

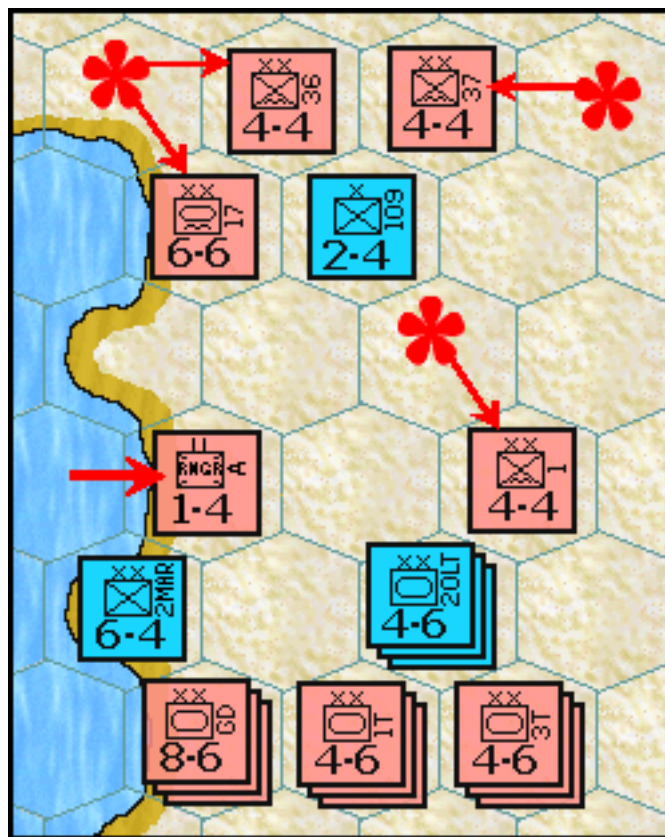


ILLUSTRATION 4: Elite forces demonstrate vertical envelopment, combined with an AV. The enemy security screen is AVd, allowing the 1st Airborne to drop in its drop zone untroubled by enemy ZOCs. The defending 20th Light Tank Division could retreat. [Not correct. Armor and air-assault units cannot retreat through enemy zones of control (BGAT). They must all stand or die.] Airborne units have a "soft" ZOC, but any infantry with the 20th must stand or die. Note the landing by the Rangers.

A final note: The Aving units must delay their after-combat advance until the other battles are finished. Though they can't help eliminate the

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defenders, this turn, they can still redeploy against counterattack, or advance next to the survivors and make them uncomfortable.

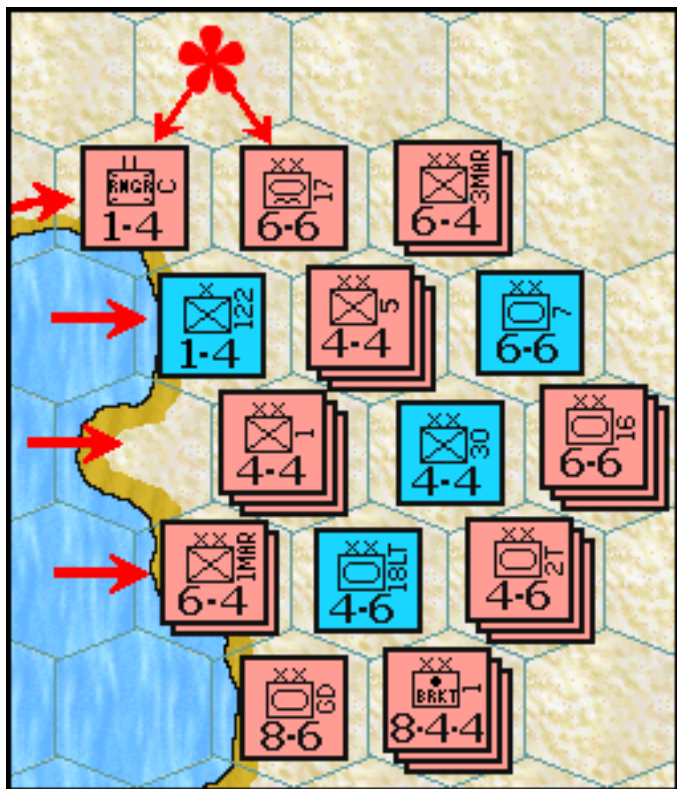


ILLUSTRATION 5: Amphibious forces demonstrate another way of outflanking an enemy. This invasion was not anticipated. Note the AV by air-dropped Air Assault and Ranger units, clearing the way for the landing.

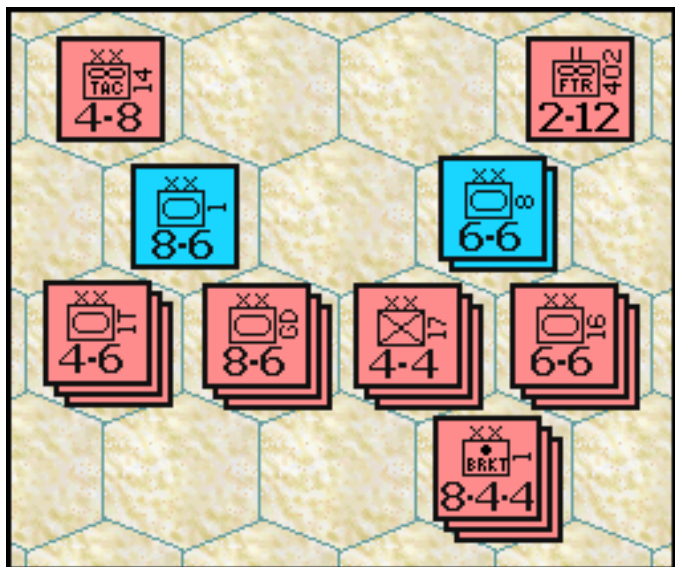


ILLUSTRATION 6: Interdiction is shown to advantage here. For some reason, the enemy didn't intercept, so the Blue 1st Armored is surrounded. The FTR unit does NOT have a ground ZOC -- four factors or more are needed -- but it still provides an aerial ZOC and can intercept enemy fighters as a patroller.

Critical Issue #2, in discussing retreat tactics, has distilled *BLITZKRIEG* tactics to its essentials. Players will find that most game casualties will be due to blocked retreats, especially now that the supply rules have changed, and tactics will devolve into a struggle for encirclement.

CRITICAL ISSUE #3: TURN ONE -- BLUE

GREAT BLUE, Imperial Federation of. One of two Great Powers on its continent, Blue is primarily bounded by West and South Gulfs, with a separate province on the Northwest Peninsula. Blue possesses a large coastline and a maritime-based economy, and is equal to Big Red in population, despite its smaller land area. Blue now has a marginal lead in the recent arms race, prompted by the rise of popular, revanchist sentiment and a military-backed Regency.

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.5

Blue's options on the first turn are somewhat limited, due solely to geography. Yellow is the only minor country that borders Blue; further, Yellow is the largest of the minors, with some cities barely accessible. Green is the only other country, after Yellow, with invasion beaches on minor-country soil -- putting all other minor countries out of Blue's reach.

Blue has an additional problem in that it is a non-contiguous, i.e., two-part, state-like pre-1939 Germany or pre-1971 Pakistan, or the continental U.S., with Alaska. The province containing the River Sparling becomes vulnerable if Yellow isn't annexed, for Red could get access to that sea zone through VV25. So, an invasion of Yellow is almost inevitable.

Further, Yellow is vital to Blue offensively, as well as defensively. From the pivotal city of EE25, Blue can directly threaten Green, Brown, and the desert.

With this in mind, five strategies become apparent. First, a word on air force deployment --

without Yellow, Great Blue has only two airbases close to the critical theaters around the lake. Of the two -- S25 and V33, only the latter is convenient to Green and, as a port, provides clout under the Naval Ascendancy rule. Putting three wings of FTR into V33 (and a fourth in Sea Zone C) will cover the area under the Naval Ascendancy and Air Combat rules -- but air units in S25 and the capital would see little action in most cases. Thus, the deployment shown in many of the strategies below. Diversion of MDM and TAC to Q16 is a way of providing Turn One action for the bomber forces and, coincidentally, ties up Sea Zone B under the Naval Ascendancy rule. These units can, of course, stage into Yellow on Turn Two well in time for combat with the Red Air Force.

Five strategic options are apparent to Blue, as italicized. I provide setups for most of them, to illustrate their potential and limitations. The options are:

1. *Invade Yellow.* This is a standard Blue opening. Chart 1 illustrates one method of subduing Yellow in one turn. Since armored units can ignore city ZOCs, and stacks of three units per hex are allowed, capture of EE25 is easier than in *BLITZKRIEG '65*. Blue will have units left over, after the needed 24 factors are allotted to each city, so as much armor as possible should deploy forward to EE25. Such a mass, backed by infantry at V20, would permit a second-turn offensive in Green or Brown. This would catch Red off-balance, especially if Red invaded Green on Turn One.

2. *Invade Yellow and Green.* Chart 2 shows one way. Other than an extreme-range armored drive past X27, the invasion of Green will require sea and air landings. This will require all ten amphibious divisions and every jump-trained soldier in Great Blue, including the Rangers, who take up room for two divisions at sea and must fly in, instead. Note that CCI5 can be reached by armor, just barely. The Yellow-Green option, regardless of tactics, will scatter Blue forces over half the map, and weakens the V33 garrison. The invasion had better succeed. The limited reach into the Green interior leaves the entire Blue bridge-head open to counterattack, no matter how well set up. Attacks on ten cities will entail large losses, of course. Finally, Red can counterattack directly-across the South Lawrence -- or indirectly,

through Brown or the desert, throwing Blue off-balance.

This option has slight advantages -- Red will be surprised, and may not be able to retaliate effectively unless he is massed in force around NN48. Further, NN48 itself could be bombed by Blue SAC units from V33, without violating Black neutrality; the raid need not be a night mission, either, if Red fighters aren't at NN48 by some fluke. Finally, Blue can confront Red on the S. Lawrence, not the isthmus, and can eventually enter Black. Finally, successful invasion of Green will help secure Sea Zone C, which would screen the Blue homeland from amphibious assault. All this, of course, is contingent on the survival of the Blue forces in Green.

3. *Invade Green.* Refer to Chart 2, the invasion force will be the same as with the Yellow-Green option, less the overland armored drive, of course. The difference would have to be made up with MDM and TAC units from east Blue. A sealift of ten armored divisions could enter Sea Zone C hoping that at least one port is functioning on the second turn; this sealift would be the second wave of a war backed solely by sea and air power. Once the first and second waves have been deployed to their bases and ports, the remaining ground forces can be poised along the Yellow border. This feint must look convincing, or Red will prepare a severe counterattack from NN48.

This plan uses Yellow neutrality as a shield, closing off much of the board. Red would escalate the war into the north and center only by entering Yellow as an aggressor, with all the disadvantages that entails. Blue, however, would not be directly threatened, but would be fighting a remote war on Red's doorstep, with an advance into Black and southern Red intended. Of course, air and naval superiority over Sea Zone C is essential if this option is to be more than a pipe-dream.

The risks of a Green-only option are manifest -- but God help Red if it succeeds!

A final note on Options 2 and 3: Blue may be going a gulf too far. Observant players will spot the obvious: Red forces from NN48 will cross the South Lawrence like a jealous husband. Armored forces will surround and destroy much of the first wave, south of the isthmus, and Blue's only antidote is the piecemeal deployment of the 12th Air

Assault Division along the river. The resulting tangle of AVs may slow the Red juggernaut somewhat, if the late 12th Air Assault is well deployed.

Certainly, the Option 2 and 3 attacks will be fallible because of the inherent weak spots in southern Greece **[Green]** -- AND holding it -- with ten amphibious and four airborne divisions (counting the Rangers among the latter). Even in later turns, a Blue invasion of Green will still have trouble getting armor as far as DD33, leaving the rest of the country insecure.

I do not highly recommend these two options, but maybe there's a solution to this puzzle. If we can put a man on the moon, Great Blue can certainly put a few across Sea Zone C.

Some other object lessons:

4. Sit Tight. In short, wait for Red to come and enter Yellow aggressively. This would make central Yellow the main battleground. This is a possible strategic option, after all, with the faint advantage of getting Red strung out. However, this option would concede much of the victory conditions.

5. Other Options, Turn One. Blue will find, quickly enough, that the minor country rules pretty much compel unilateral invasion of neutral countries -- nothing piecemeal. That leaves few options, other than the ones described so far. What else is left--invade Red directly? That would be foolhardy under the Naval Ascendancy rules. Invade any other minor country, with or without invading Yellow? Impossible, if only due to sheer distance and lack of coastline.

Thus, Blue's possible options on the first turn, viable and otherwise. Of the first three options, only the first-direct invasion of Yellow--allows Blue any initiative on the second turn. The conquest of Yellow is challenging enough, but Blue can still mass around EE25 and at sea, if there are no sideshows.

Any invasion of Green, as discussed in Options 2 and 3, will require Blue recovery on Turn Two, consolidation of conquered territory, establishment of defenses, the regathering of a strategic reserve. Though Options 2-5 are presented main-

ly as object lessons, the invasion of Green is not to be wholly condemned. The risks, and rewards, are merely increased. Blue players should consider some way of balancing their geographical disadvantage because despite Blue's first-move advantage, Red may easily capture the strategic initiative.

CRITICAL ISSUE #4: TURN ONE -- RED

RED, Corporate State of, usually referred to as "Big Red." Largest Continental nation, with several western cities, acquired during the First War, bordering directly on its neighbors. Increasingly hostile to all Continental governments since the advent of the Monolithic Party -- with the possible exception of the military junta in Yellow...

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.14

Red's first turn options actually include the setup phase. Blue's frontier and sea dispositions may indicate an invasion other than Yellow, and a Red counter can be devised from a massed, mobile force around NN48.

Red has six options, and many involve possible counterstrokes to radical Blue openings. Since White and Black cities are within an easy march of Red frontiers, many options can be explained without charts, bearing in mind that 24 factors should be assigned to each minor city. Any minor country should be subdued on the turn of invasion, of course.

The options:

1. Invade Black. A safe, conservative option. Mass at NN48 and YY43, especially the former; attack all four cities with 24 + factors each, massing the (armored) excess around JJ38; have eight infantry divisions and four Ranger battalions in Sea Zone C, with airborne reserves well in hand at NN48; and, leave White neutral as a buffer, Blue will find it nearly impossible to conquer.

This option allows Red an immediate second-turn invasion of Brown or Green; without breaking stride, the Red Army will have walked into Blue's front yard. Further, Red would be able to lacerate any Blue invasion of Green. Finally, Red will be able to keep seaborne and airborne reserves uncommitted -- a high-visibility, highly-mobile threat.

2. Invade Black and Green. A daring option, which can easily shift to a counteroffensive if Blue invades Green first. Chart 3 illustrates a means of taking both countries, assuming a Blue invasion of Yellow only, first turn.

Unlike Blue attempts at Green, Red can introduce large armored forces from the NN48 area, able to reach CC39 and AA42. This means that amphibious forces are impeded only by geography. Of these, six units can reach BB31 and/or EE34 from the beaches. The remaining four amphibious divisions (the Rangers went airborne), though barred from the isthmus by rough terrain and the beach stacking problem, can still assist the overland offensive at CC39, and help screen the isthmus from Blue paratroops (hex BB34).

Still, Red will need to commit the airborne forces, if only to ensure a secure line from BB31 to EE34. Ranger battalions should drop with them, if the air transport rules allow (Red already has four divisions).

Blue may be caught off-balance by this offensive, but can be expected to strike from X27, V20, and EE25 with any forces at hand, and land at BB31 as well. At the very least, Blue will close off the isthmus at the north end. This bottleneck can be stoppered easily.

The Black-and-Green option has much potential. Certainly, it might catch Blue off-balance and unable to retaliate. Further, Green will provide two ports on Sea Zone C, many industrial centers, and airbases within range of the Blue homeland itself. Still, Red players should realize that a) their army will wind up facing north, not west, b) Blue could launch a counter-invasion two or more turns later, c) even a Blue defensive effort could make lavish use of artillery and air power on the BBT. Finally, the Green isthmus, being easily stoppered, will require expansion of the war into Brown, and the war will be won or lost there -- not in Green.

3. Invade Black and White. Easily accomplished, as all cities are vulnerable to ground attack. However, the setup should be based on Blue intentions, and weighted in one of three ways: a) make the Black invasion armor-heavy, and plan on fighting in Brown and/or Green with only a garrison in White; b) make the White invasion armor heavy, with ten units in Sea Zone A,

with a desert war in mind; or c) spread evenly across both countries -- not a viable choice.

The 1975 change in supply rules no longer encourages city-grabbing. Such a wide advance by Red could easily dissipate the effort, and certainly leave one country or the other open to Blue liberation. Red may prefer to invade one country or the other (see Options 1 and 4), and escalate the war later.

4. Invade White. An overture to a desert war, possible and even inviting under the 1975 rules, as 1) supply is no longer such a problem, 2) armor gets double-movement in the desert, and 3) VV25 is now a port.

Essentially, Red strikes into White with all available force, less 48 factors in southern White and strong garrisons on the Red south coast. The main drive will cross northern White and proceed into the desert (assuming Blue has already violated Yellow). A maximum force in Sea Zone A is essential.

A possible use of this option is shown on Chart 4. Note that ten armored divisions drive immediately into Yellow, with airborne forces available behind them. In forces at sea, provided Blue doesn't invade near CC15, can liberate that city on Turn Two, or: a) cut supplies to the Blue desert forces by landing along the beach road, or b) invade Blue near G4.

A note on desert air forces: Air bases are limited, especially for Red. The setup shows some air units on the south coast, put to alternative use securing Sea Zone D. What the Chart 4 setup doesn't show is the second-turn staging. The Red Air Force should reassemble thus: VV25 -- two SAC and one FTR wing; WW32 -- two FTR, one TAC; BBB33 -- one TAC and two MDM (optional). The SAC units are needed against enemy troops and to bomb the enemy supply line at CC15. The FTR units are needed, if nothing else, to protect the supply line and port at VV25. Other missions can include interdiction and interception of paratroop drops, with the TAC units helpful in the former role. The MDM units may not be too useful unless Blue forces approach White -- a better use of the BBB33 units may be on the south coast, securing Sea Zones D or E. The MDM can be staged into Yellow later if all goes well.

The war can be limited to the desert. Of the three avenues of attack in the center board, the desert is the widest and most volatile. A successful offensive by Red could prevent an escalation of the war into Brown (a drive on EE25 will stop that). The tactical fine points discussed in Critical Issue #2 will realize their fullest potential there in the desert. Finally, Red will find that the second and third turn reinforcements, which include seven more armored divisions, will fit in nicely.

This option is the most radical. It can succeed, but Red should reevaluate it if Blue is threatening Green with a first-turn invasion. If so, Red may want to setup a Black-only option and plan to counterattack. A march into the desert could unbalance a Blue invasion of Green, but both players will face a risky game, with the neutrality of Black and Yellow being key issues. A successful desert war will depend on Black neutrality and Red's status as liberator of Yellow.

5. Invade White, Black, and Brown. Once Brown becomes a first-turn objective, other countries become involved in the planning. Since the most direct route is across southern White, that country will have to be violated. Since the war is being fought south of the mountains, Black will have to be invaded sooner or later, or why bother? Besides, the most direct road from Red to Brown runs through White AND Black (YY43 to VV42, then into White at UU37, then on to NN33).

Thus, the crux of the invasion. Seven Black and White cities would require 84 factors. Three armored divisions could follow the "direct" road from YY43 to NN33, violating three countries at once, and reinforcing 22 airborne factors in Brown, which is all that can reach. Without the armored forces, the airborne couldn't both take Brown and defend it—thus, the three-country invasion.

The resulting mess is illustrated by Chart 5, showing the possibilities and risks of this offensive. Chart 5 makes the (questionable) assumption that Red airdrop and air-transport capabilities are somehow independent, so SIX units (each Ranger battalion equaling one-half unit) drop into Brown. Even so, the attack will entail high losses to minor country resistance, particularly in the low-odds attacks in Brown. Airborne losses will be particularly bad, even if Blue doesn't counterattack for some reason.

Red will be scattered badly, and will spend the second turn consolidating and reorganizing. The second turn will also be for staging aircraft -- preferably forward into Brown. A third-turn offensive to the west will preclude an invasion of Green or occupied White.

The advantage of this option is that Red is into Brown on the first turn, right in Blue's lap. Furthermore, the attack on Brown can be called off, and it had better be if Blue invades Green first. Red's forfeiture of the initiative is offset by the fact that a second-turn invasion of Brown would be considered anyway.

Unfortunately, Blue would get away with a second-turn invasion of Green, with Red off-balance. Further, Blue has the option of closing off western Brown, between the mountains and the lake. This done, Blue could then escalate the war into Green or the desert.

This option is possible, even plausible, but not recommended.

6. Other Options. A Black-Brown or Brown-White invasion were already ruled out, as direct supply and reinforcement would be difficult because of the peculiar road-net in southern White and northeast Black. Further, a Brown-White invasion would make Brown a sideshow to the desert war, with Blue able to undermine it all with a drive through Brown into southern White.

Finally, a Green-only or Blue-only invasion, on the first turn, would be patently absurd. Other options are too fantastic even to consider; thus, Red's many options have been described. Red is fortunate in that setup and movement are performed after Blue's. Further, Red is more flexible than Blue on the first turn, if only because of Red's longer land frontiers.

CRITICAL ISSUE #5: TURN TWO

"If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all."

-Hamlet, Act V, Scene II

The second turn, although largely guided by the first turn's offensives, is critical in its own right. This is the turn that Red and Blue will confront

each other directly, and the first meeting engagements will often occur then.

Continental geography will determine much of the planning at the first turn's end. Unless Blue is already committed to Green, that player will see three avenues from EE25; south into Green, southeast into Brown, and northeast into the Great Koufax Desert. A fourth option, a massing at EE25 for a crushing third-turn counteroffensive, would trade the initiative for a tactical advantage over the Red vanguard. Red will be more constrained, as Red forces will already have been deployed in the north or south. Red's sphere of interest is split by a great range of forests and mountains running from EE25 to Lake Frederick—a divide that Blue will not yet have reached. Red will have been committed north or south of the Divide on Turn One. Few players would, or should, fight a three-front war.

If Red is committed to the desert, as Critical Issue #4 showed, the war will be largely fought there. Strategy will narrow to the desert's confines, and is dealt with in Critical Issue #6.

A Red drive in the traditional area, south of the Divide, will pose two choices on the second turn: Attack north or south of Lake Pinsky. Waiting at JJ38 is not a realistic choice, for Red should not allow Blue the initiative, or access to the Zocchi-South Lawrence line.

Much of the preplanning for Turn Two is described in Critical Issues #3 and #4. Players will find that a follow-through strategy is best, if only to be prepared for the Turn Two challenge. A weak offensive on that turn, due to poor planning or weak forces, will be crushed before reinforcements can arrive.

The actual theaters of battle, and the tactics used once a player enters them, are addressed, one by one, in Critical Issue #6.

Chart 6 shows the balance of forces during the reinforcement turns, before the players fall back on replacements. Blue starts the game with a slight advantage in numbers, but this will peak by Turn Three.

Red's parity will improve on the fourth and fifth turns, though the all-armored Turn Three reinforcements puts them ahead of Blue in that category. Blue reinforcements enjoy a surge in the

sixth and eighth turns leaving both forces roughly equal in armor and infantry units. A critical problem is Red's advantage in "elite" formations -- one additional airborne division for the first two turns, and one additional Marine division for the course of the game. Still, this picture is an abstract. The actual balance of forces will be determined by the carnage the players will inflict on one another—which will begin in earnest after Turn Two.

CRITICAL ISSUE #6: PRIMARY THEATERS

Two massive terrain features, in the center of the *BLITZKRIEG* board, split the battlefields as dramatically as the Pripet Marsh or the Thuringerwald (between the Hof and Fulda gaps). The *BLITZKRIEG* features, Lake Pinsky and the Divide (particularly the Koufax Mountains in Brown and west-central White), effectively create three avenues, theaters where Red and Blue will meet in decisive battle.

GREAT KOUFAX DESERT. Arid region north of the Koufax Mountains characterized by barren tracts and low winter temperatures. Scene of some First War actions, and the subsequent (and bloody) Great Koufax War between Yellow and White. The Koufax has proven to have large oil deposits -- the sole industry and export of both countries. The Koufax is thought to be suitable for armored warfare, though maintenance will be a problem in a protracted war.

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.8

BLITZKRIEG '75 introduces players to a dramatic new field of battle: the Koufax. Supply constraints, other than line of supply, have been removed, and armored movement is now doubled. The result is an area where any breakthrough will have major consequences.

The Koufax is easily the widest front. The doubled armor movement, the enhanced armor ZOCs and stacking, and the exposed supply line will allow turbulent, game-winning offensives. Finesse will be well-rewarded; casualties will be large because the featureless terrain affords no refuge. Obviously the only possible defense will be the counterattack.

Oddly, terrain isn't a tactical factor. The desert has no forests, rivers, mountains, or cities to

break it up and impede movement (except at the edges). Pure, abstract tactics can be utilized, as illustrated in Critical Issue #2. Thus, the desert is a clear, sanded arena for the protagonists.

Some unique disadvantages persist, however. Both sides will find the lack of airbases a problem. Only four cities lie at either end: CC15 and EE25 in the west; VV25 and WW32 in the east. However, any player possessing Brown will find an ideal site for airbases -- particularly OO30, three hexes from the Koufax, and shielded by mountains. Thus, escalation into Brown will be tempting if the desert war is protracted.

Another disadvantage is the supply line. An army proceeding past the halfway point will find that supplies must follow the coast road -- an umbilical cord easily cut by sea or air landings. Strategic bombing of CC15 or VV25 will also cut the road, and fighter deployment at either end is crucial if for no other reason.

The Koufax has three primary exits: West past CC15, southwest toward EE25, and east into White. Two minor exits should not be overlooked: Southeast past WW32, and south through hex NN25. The latter is particularly valuable as it provides access to Brown, at the cost of only a slight delay -- the mountains narrow to only one hex there. Armies emerging from any exit will find enemy airbases more numerous, with friendly air support initially lacking.

The secondary exits are of local interest; the primary exits are critical, and the objects of the desert war. Red forces emerging from the west end of the Koufax will be in a position to liberate Yellow and divide Blue in two pieces at the Adams River. Red forces moving southwest through EE25 can easily cut off Blue armies in Brown and Green. Blue forces, on their part, emerge from the eastern Koufax directly into the Red heartland.

In summary: Neither army, once committed to the Koufax, dares falter. Defeat on this one front will lead directly to final blackout.

BROWN, Kingdom of. *As small as White in population (though not quite as poor); smallest minor country in size. Brown has the fortune of natural obstacles on virtually all sides -- the Koufax Mountains, Lake Pinsky, and two rivers. The capital is deep in rough country; fortunate, as*

Brown has had to rely on its traditional neutrality, as its days of feudal power have long since.

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.3

Brown is analogous to real-life Belgium -- the opposing forces will find it a useful stepping-stone to outflank the other fronts, especially Green. Further, Brown narrows at its east and west ends, and an invader will easily defend it against counterattack, especially if Green, White, or Black are neutral. West Brown can be defended along a line from the mountains to the lake (five hexes, or four if Green is neutral). Blue can hold east Brown along the River Zocchi -- half its length will suffice if either White or Black are neutral.

The advantages of seizing Brown first are manifest: Airbases convenient to both the desert and the Green isthmus, a means of cutting off enemies in Green, direct access to the enemy's front yard, and, for Red, a chance to turn the flank of armies in the western desert. Defensive advantages are enhanced by Brown's lack of sea-coast, negating all but the occasional Ranger raid.

An invasion of Brown usually occurs on the third or fourth turn, to outflank an adjoining theater. Brown can be invaded first, i.e., on Turn Two, but the enemy can defend at the far end of this one front, and both players will face a critical decision: Where to escalate next, and when?

GREEN, Mercantile League of. *Long, narrow country bordering much of South Gulf, with two major ports. Topography -- particularly the lake, the border rivers, and the rough country in the north and south-serve to protect Green somewhat. Green's independence is primarily due to the lack of land borders with any Great Power. Great Blue's air force and Red naval presence in the Gulf continue to threaten Green's pursuit of prosperity. Green is the most industrialized minor nation, with a GNP of...*

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.7

Green is the most tactically dangerous theater. Two beaches pose a continual threat from seaward. Great Blue airbases are close by; conversely, Red air forces in Green can threaten Blue cities in turn. The two northern cities are astride an isthmus that can easily be blocked, which will end the armored threat -- but instead start a

round of artillery and air bombardment that will make Verdun look like a musical comedy.

Green is difficult to pass by, however. Three of its four cities have critical industries. Further, one-turn conquest will put an army deep in enemy territory. Blue invaders will reach a (risky) springboard into Black at the South Lawrence. Red, if first in, will have two ports on Sea Zone C, air bases for raids into Blue, and a possible threat to southern Yellow and western Brown. However, Blue can usually counter a Red invasion by closing off the isthmus at the north end, making Red's advantages on this front more subtle than direct.

The rough country in central Green is critical during invasions. Of the beach hexes, BB32 is only useful for attacking Township BB31; AA32 is mountainous and prevents further movement. The forest to the south will limit access to Township EE34 -- only beach hex AA33 is within four hexes of the city, so only three seaborne units can reach. The remainder of the southern beach is useful only for attacking CC39 and establishing defenses in the mountain and forest hexes. Blue may not be able to establish a line on the South Lawrence unless paratroops are diverted, and AA42 will still have to be taken. Overland access to Green, of course, is from far to the north, from occupied Yellow.

The result of a Blue seizure or a Blue invasion of Green, on Turn One or whenever, is one of two evils -- seizure of only the northern two cities, with the partisan activity that will result; or, an attempt to take the whole country, with the inherent risks, as discussed in Critical Issue #3. Any Blue invasion from the north and/or west will have, at best, weak screening forces along the South Lawrence, and Red armored forces could retake central and southern Green in short order. So, Blue may not find aggression worthwhile in Green, if Blue still has the initiative at that time.

Green will benefit Red mostly. Blue should figure on winning there only with a counter-invasion later, or in a war of attrition. Blue will probably have to win the war, offensively, in Brown.

CRITICAL ISSUE #7: SECONDARY THEATERS

Some examination of the remaining minor countries is in order, partly due to first-turn problems of conquest, partly due to possible action later. Major nations' topography will not be discussed -- by the time the war reaches into a player's home country, a defeat is near.

YELLOW, Republic of. *Recreated at end of First Continental War, largely out of Green and Great Blue territory; annexed desert province from White later. Largely rural economy; unable to compete with Great Blue rearmament. Yellow is the largest minor country; much of its unique political geography is indefensible. Separatist movements on both sides of the Yellow-Blue frontier continue to threaten Continental peace.*

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.23

Eastern Yellow, the desert, has already been mentioned. The remainder of Yellow bears discussion. Yellow is squarely in Blue's way, and separates the two halves of Great Blue, leaving that player with little alternative to immediate invasion.

Yellow is not only the largest minor country in size, but in cities as well -- six of them, far more than the three-to-four-city norm. The easternmost cities are difficult for Blue to reach. Still, three armored divisions can reach CC15 along the coast road, going from hex L6 to BB15. Other armored units can reach EE25 and Q16, bypassing V20 along the way. Blue's Option 1, as discussed in Critical Issue #3, concentrates armor at EE25 -- leaving CC15 to airborne and amphibious assault; the result is a large armored concentration on the Brown frontier at the end of Turn One, poised and ready.

Thus, Township EE25 is the fulcrum with which Blue can move the game. EE25 can serve as a springboard into Brown, as infantry can airlift into the city and follow the armored forces. EE25 can also serve as a doorway into Green. Other Blue forces could have massed at V20 during the first turn, ready to assist. Finally, EE25 is a convenient base for deployment into the Koufax, given the desert movement bonus.

First-turn seizure of Yellow will require 24 factors against each city, if losses are to be minimized, and capture guaranteed. To keep Blue forces forward for the second turn, the remote cities (M14, U11, and X27) can be taken with the aid of tactical air and artillery.

Blue air units will find few eastern bases initially, for V33 is the only forward base in east Blue, S25 is in an awkward spot, and X27 is neutral at start. Basing TAC and MDM back in Q16, as an alternative, will not only allow them to strike at most of Yellow, but affords control over Sea Zone B under the Naval Ascendancy rules. Conquest of Yellow will allow the air units to stage into Yellow on Turn Two, into the excellent forward airbases at X27 and EE25.

Some supply considerations: three cities, as road junctions, form choke-points for the Blue war effort. Bombardment or seizure of EE25 in particular would cut off supplies to the main fronts around Lake Pinsky, especially in Brown. The junction at V20 is another obvious bottleneck, controlling all access to the Blue mainland. All supplies to the eastern desert, of course, must pass through CC15. All three cities (EE25, V20, and CC15) are thus particularly important targets for Red bombers, as roads can be cut by bombing city road nets, and loss of EE25 and one of the other two would be serious. Red, with access to a better road-net in Black, is not as vulnerable.

Yellow's four ports border on no less than three sea zones. X27 is particularly valuable as a sea and air base, nicely supporting V33. The absence of a road from X27 into Green is not as advantageous, but Blue reinforcements can be introduced to the fronts through V20.

A note on garrisons: All cities as vulnerable to some form of sea or air attack. EE25, V20, CC15, and especially X27 should elicit concern in this regard, if only because of the reason discussed above.

Finally, Yellow has 23 mountain hexes, more than any other minor country. These are well-scattered throughout Yellow, and make excellent strongpoints.

WHITE, Free State of. *Northern half desert; southern half largely rough terrain; the whole undesirable to conquerors historically. The new port and refinery complex on the River Szekely has provided White with an improved economy, although the land is still too impoverished to compete in the arms race. Competition with Red refineries upriver, and controversy over North*

Sea container trade, has been a source of some Red-White discord.

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.20

The entire northern half of White, being desert, was addressed in the preceding Critical Issue. With two Red cities on or near the border, any Blue invasion from the desert would threaten Red's very survival.

A key geographic factor is that White is split across the middle by considerable mountain and forest terrain, making access from Brown difficult. Movement from the north is well-nigh impossible if the central pass is defended. Thus, a guarantor of White neutrality, at least from Blue's standpoint. For this reason, Red has a compelling reason to keep White neutral, if a desert campaign is declined. Blue invasion, even if launched from the Yellow border, will not reach UU37 unless Blue already possesses Brown. In the event, Red could enter White as a liberator, and Blue will lose four factors per turn, guaranteed.

A neutral White will also allow Red to have a secure right flank, as the Red Army drives through Black and Brown. Escalation of the fighting into White can come at Red's leisure. If Brown falls to Blue, Red can defend the lower Zocchi and invade White later, using it to turn Blue's flank.

BLACK, Democratic People's Republic of. *Comparable to Green in population and urban development, but without any major industry. Largely flat, with a transverse belt of forests and hills, Black is the most heavily forested of the minor powers. Black shares a long border with Big Red, a disadvantage since the recent ideological rift. The Witz River is still regarded as a protection against Red, though not tested during this century.*

-Domesday Encyclopedia, v.2

Black is usually fated to be Big Red's doormat. Red forces can reach all cities without resorting to airborne or sea forces -- even infantry can get from NN48 to the lake port at JJ38, providing an alternative to armor losses. The lake port provides an outstanding air base, and is convenient to invasion of either Green or Brown. The other three cities are also useful as air bases to a varying degree; JJ46 can additionally serve as a port. Ranger operations can be mounted from JJ38.

All cities in Green and Brown are one turn's march from the Black frontiers, especially the Black lakeshore area. A Red concentration at NN48 can easily proceed on into Green, especially as a means of counter-invasion.

Blue will find access to Black to be difficult. Overland approaches to Black must cross one of two major rivers. Black has no beach anywhere near, and Blue will have no port in that sea zone until most of Black has fallen. Further, Red can use the curve of cities, forest, and hills from JJ46 to UU37 as a defensive line.

CRITICAL ISSUE #8: AVIATION

The Tournament Game adds a new dimension to the game -- players will have to use air power, and not merely exploit an abstract, as in *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*. Actual air strategy and tactics will come into play, particularly on the interaction of various air and ground units.

Players who remember *BLITZKRIEG '65* should study the air rules with particular care. Little of the old game is recognizable. Bombardment of cities is less effective than before; all other aviation capabilities have been amplified and diversified. Ground troops and supply lines suffer particular damage, a trend in real life as well as in revised *BLITZKRIEG*.

Abstracts of air unit capabilities are found in Charts 7 and 8. SAC and MDM units are particularly effective against ground units; TAC and FTR units excel at interdiction and anti-air missions. Interdiction is particularly disruptive to the ground war. Bombing of cities should be selective, as the effects are of short duration. The proximity of NN48 and V33 to the fighting fronts means that Red naval and Blue air industries are vulnerable to harassment, especially as no minor country has aircraft plants. The best means of attack is against the city road net, as this would have the most dramatic effect. The war, after all, will have to be won on the ground.

Fighters will find two missions possible, with Patrol or Interdiction missions being the only ones carried over into an enemy turn. The Patrol missions are critical to interception, as the rules require some sort of early warning if interception is to occur. In short, the radius of action of interceptors is limited to how far the enemy flew after passing friendly air or ground ZOCs (electronic

countermeasures must be neutralizing ground radar under these rules -- not implausible these days).

Escort missions will be of some importance. Even a token escort will mean that all units therein can return fire, and the intercepting force is doubled, not tripled, in firepower. Besides, bombers intercepted without escort will bomb at half-effectiveness.

Even a token escort can be backed by a Hunt mission, which is more potent. If more than one bombing mission can be arranged adjacent to a hunt mission, the hunt is that much more effective. Players will find that the subtleties of hunt, escort, and patrol missions will be as attractive as the more dramatic interception and patrol sorties. Indeed, a balance of all five missions is best.

Finally, a note on bases. Fighters should be furthest forward, for ease of deployment, and the fact that "interceptors" can avoid any preemptive attacks. V33 and the three lake ports are particularly well-sited fighter bases, as is OO40 for central and desert operations.

CRITICAL ISSUE #9: THE HOME FRONT

Some economic statistics may be useful, as illustrated by Chart 9. Blue and Red start the game with the *minimum* number of each industry, be it aircraft, petrochemical, or whatever. The naval stores and basic-industry cities are particularly resistant to bombing, in that they possess two and three hexes each, not one. **[Not correct. Avalon Hill has ruled that all the resources attributed to a multi-hex city are concentrated in the specific hex cited in paragraph 36. That means that successfully bombing only that single hex effects that resource. Therefore, naval stores and basic-industry cities are no more resistant to bombing than aircraft or petrochemical cities.]** However, acquisition of minor-country industries will be necessary to provide a cushion.

Minor countries possess six critical-resource cities. Of these, three are in Green; the remainder are divided among Yellow, White, and Brown; Black has no critical resources. The remaining 14 minor-country cities are useful mainly for transport purposes: air bases, road/supply links, and, in a few cases, as ports (unlike *BLITZKRIEG*

'65, minor country cities are no longer sources of supply).

Port facilities are of passing interest; Chart 10 clarifies the picture. Red is distinguished by fewer ports, a factor pertinent mainly to naval ascendancy. Of the minor-country ports, Green provides Red with access to Sea Zone C. White provides Red access to Sea Zone A and can be used by Blue for seaborne reinforcements, slightly faster than overland. The port at VV25 serves as an alternate, seaborne supply link to the desert front, distinct from the road net.

As noted, a player can be damaged by loss of critical-resource cities which make up ALL of the home-country cities. A direct invasion of a player's homeland, fortunately, must maintain supply lines through intervening sea zones, (players are urged to use the Naval Ascendancy rules). Indeed, the first countermeasure to such an invasion should be to introduce aircraft to an intervening sea zone. Thus, a large air presence in, say, V33 or JJ46 will both aid the main effort and defend the homeland, indirectly.

This is just as well, for a city such as G4 could be hit by as many as nine units (44 factors), ignoring Rangers, from three beach hexes. Marine divisions are particularly potent in stacks of three, and are the largest amphibious units available. So, a city close to a beach in Sea Zone C, the likeliest invasion site, should have not less than an eight-factor garrison if it (and its aircraft) is to avoid destruction.

Other coastal cities, those not directly threatened, should not be that well-garrisoned as a rule, as there would be few troops left for the front. Since invasions out-of-zone are unlikely, given the Naval Ascendancy requirements, coastal defenses should be moved to face enemy task forces, as they move from zone to zone.

A token string of one- and two-factor garrisons will augment your coastal defenses and are a minimum requirement to keep the Rangers out. If a Ranger battalion were to enter an ungarrisoned port, eight or nine divisions could follow by sea, plus four airlifted divisions, all in one turn. **[Actually, the divisions by sea and air would have to wait until the next turn. Units can only transport to "friendly" cities and rule 5.1 prevents cities from being friendly on the turn of occupation.]** Naval ascendancy or not, a token guard should hold all ports, including those away from beaches like M14.

Invasions deep in an enemy country are not advisable, if for no other reason than this: Such efforts do not contribute to the land war, where the game is won or lost. Invasions are best, and likeliest, immediately in the rear of a fighting front (such as in Green or the desert) or close enough to contribute (such as V33). Blue would be well-advised to keep paratroops at the vital V33 base whenever they are on standby -- even an unsuccessful Red attempt at V33 would be no fun.

All of this coastal defense discussion runs counter to what older players remember of *BLITZKRIEG*, even to what I wrote in "*Blitzkrieg Invasion Possibilities*" (Mar-Apr '74, Vol.10 No.6). The change in stacking rules means that greater concentration is possible and this is important to invaders coming off a beach to attack a nearby city. Stripping forces from the main fronts won't guarantee a secure home front. However, an invasion can only succeed if supplies can be traced from friendly ports and control of the sea will determine this. The best defense of one's homeland is careful attention to the Naval Ascendancy rule, particularly in deployment of aircraft.

A final reminder: The critical resources rule, including the aircraft industry, will be the undoing of a player forced into the last ditch. Once the enemy crosses the border, a reversal of fortunes will become increasingly unreachable. ●

CHART 1

GREAT BLUE: THE YELLOW OPTION

DIVISION TYPE	START HEX	END HEX	MISSION
3 Marine	Sea Zone C	Sea Zone C	Standby
1 Infantry	Sea Zone C	Sea Zone C	Standby
4 Ranger Bn	Sea Zone C	Sea Zone C	Standby
1 FTR	Sea Zone C	Sea Zone C	Standby
2 Infantry	P29	Sea Zone C	Standby
3 Infantry (detachments) 24 factors total	2 factors: C20/D31/P29 1 factor: P15/P16/D7/L19/G4/H33**		Static Garrison Static Garrison
4 Infantry	Sea Zone A	BB14/DD16	Attack CC15
2 Airborne	S25	CC16	Attack CC15*
1 Hvy Arm, 2 Armor	Q16	EE24	Attack EE25
1 Hvy Arm, 2 Armor	P15	DD24	Attack EE25*
3 Lt Tank	P17	CC23	Standby
1 LT, 1 Arm	P16	DD23	Standby
2 Infantry	V33	W27	X27: Attack*
3 Infantry	R20	V21	Attack V20
3 Infantry	P18	V19	Attack V20
Air Aslt	V33	V33	Standby
1 BA, 2 Inf	L11	N14	Attack M14*
2 BA	S22	W26	Attack X27*
3 FTR	V33	V33	Cover Sea Zone C
2 TAC	P16	P16	Attack M14
2 MDM	P15	P15	Attack U11
1 BA, 1 Inf	L6	T11	Attack U11*
2 SAC	P19	P19	Standby
BA--Breakthrough Artillery, LT--Light Tank, Hvy Armor--Heavy Armor (8-factor), Inf--Infantry, *--advance after combat, **--P15/P16 garrisons start in L19. NOTE: Abbreviations remain the same for subsequent invasion charts.			

**CHART 2
GREAT BLUE: THE YELLOW-GREEN OPTION**

DIVISION TYPE	START HEX	END HEX	MISSION
1 Inf	P29	V33	Garrison
3 Inf	Detachments -- see Yellow Option		Garrison duties
2 MDM	P15	P15	Attack U11
2 TAC	P16	P16	Attack U11
1 Hvy Arm, 2 Armor	L6	BB15	Attack CC15
3 Inf	K6	T11	Attack U11*
1 LT, 1 BA	L11	N14	Attack M14
1 Inf	Sea Zone C:		
2 Inf	AA35	BB38	Attack CC39*
2 Inf	AA36	CC38	Attack CC39*
2 Inf	AA37	BB39	Attack CC39*
1 Inf	BB32	BB32	Attack BB31
3 Mar	AA33	EE33	Attack EE34*
1 FTR	Sea Zone C		Interception
3 FTR	V33	Green	Patrol/Intercept
1 Hvy Arm, 2 Arm	U26	BB30	Attack BB31*
3 Inf	V27	W27	Attack X27
1 FA, 1 Inf	T25	W26	Attack X27*
2 BA	S22	V21	Attack V20*
2 Inf	P16	V19	Attack V20*
3 LT	Q16	EE24	Attack EE25
2 Arm	P15	DD24	Attack EE25*
2 SAC	Capital	Capital	Bomb NN48
2 Airborne	S25	AA41	Attack AA42
1 Air Aslt	V33	BB42	Attack AA42
2 Rgr Bn	V33	AA43	Attack AA42*

CHART 3
BIG RED: THE BLACK & GREEN OPTION

DIVISION TYPE	START HEX	END HEX	MISSION
3 Marine	BB32**	BB32	Attack BB31***
2 Inf	AA33**	DD33	Attack EE34***
1 Marine	AA33**	CC32	Attack BB31
1 Inf	Z33**	BB34	Security
1 Inf	AA37**	BB38	Attack CC39
2 Airborne	YY43	EE33	Attack EE34*
1 Air Assault	YY43	EE35	Attack EE34
1 Airborne	NN48	AA43	Attack AA42*
1 Inf	NN48	JJ39	Attack JJ38
3 BA	SS45	OO41	Attack OO40*
1 Inf	TT45	PP41	Attack OO40*
1 BA, 2 Inf	ZZ48	WW42	Attack VV42*
1 Tank, 2 Inf	QQ50	JJ45	Attack JJ46***
2 Hvy Arm	NN49	BB42	Attack AA42
1 Armored			
3 Armored	OO50	II38	Attack JJ38
3 Armored	PP50	DD40	Attack CC39*
1 Inf	Four 1-factor garrisons:	RRR39/RRR54 JJJ56/BBB54	
1 Inf	RR50	NN48	Garrison
1 Inf	RR50	NN49	Garrison
2 TAC	YY43	YY43	Attack VV42
2 MDM	NN48	NN48	Attack JJ46
1 SAC	NN48	NN48	Standby
1 SAC	YY43	YY43	Standby
3 FTR	NN49	NN49	Intercept/Patrol
1 FTR	Sea Zone C	Sea Zone C	Intercept
1 Inf YY43	YY43	YY43	Garrison
4 Rgr Bn	BBB54	Sea Zone D	Reserve
2 Inf	BBB54	Sea Zone D	Reserve

* -- Advance after combat.

** -- Invasion; starts in Sea Zone C.

*** -- Advance one unit.

**CHART 4
BIG RED: PLAN WHITE OPTION**

DIVISION TYPE	START HEX	END HEX	MISSION
4 Marine	Sea Zone A	Sea Zone A?	Standby or
4 Ranger	Sea Zone A	Sea Zone A?	Invasion:
4 Infantry	Sea Zone A	Sea Zone A?	CC15, G4
2 Hvy Arm, 1 Armored	CCC29	OO23	Invade Yellow
3 Armored	DDD29	PP24	Invade Yellow
2 Armored	EEE30	QQ24	Invade Yellow
1 Armored	BBB33	PP26 via ZZ30	Security
1 Tank	BBB33	PP27	Security
3 Airborne	FFF30	UU24	Attack VV25*
1 BA, 1 Inf	GGG31	WW26	Attack VV25*
1 BA, 1 Inf	CCC34	XX32	Attack WW32*
1 Air Aslt	ZZ48	VV32	Attack WW32*
2 BA, 1 Inf	ZZ41	VV38	Attack UU37*
1 Inf	NN48	NN48	Garrison
1 Inf	NN49	NN49	Garrison
2 Inf	BBB54	BBB54	Garrison
1 Inf	RRR40	RRR40	Garrison
1 Inf	RRR54	RRR54	Garrison
2 Inf (detached)	6 factors -- ZZ48 1 factor -- JJJ56 1 factor -- YY43		Garrison Garrison Garrison
2 MDM	YY43	YY43	Attack UU37
2 SAC, 1 Inf	FFF30	FFF30/BBB33	Standby
2 TAC	BBB33	BBB33	Attack WW32
3 FTR	NN48/49	NN48/49	Secure Zone/Intercept
1 FTR	Sea Zone A	Sea Zone A	Intercept/Interdict

CHART 5

BIG RED: THE WHITE-BROWN-BLACK OPTION

DIVISION TYPE	START HEX	END HEX	MISSION
2 Hvy Arm	YY43	OO34 via	Attack NN33*
1 Armored		VV42, UU37 areas	
4 Ranger	ZZ48	1 ea at JJ28 and JJ30 2 ea at II31	Screen Attack HH31
1 Air Assault	ZZ48	3 factors ea: II32 OO31	Attack HH31 Attack OO30
1 Airborne	BBB33	II32	Attack HH31*
1 Airborne	BBB33	NN29	Attack OO30
1 Airborne	BBB33	OO31	Attack OO30*
1 BA, 1 Inf	CCC29	WW26	Attack VV25*
2 MDM	FFF30	FFF30	Attack VV25
1 BA, 2 Inf	CCC34	XX32	Attack WW32*
2 TAC	BBB33	BBB33	Attack WW32
2 BA, 1 Inf	ZZ41	VV38	Attack UU37*
1 Tank	ZZ42	UU38	Attack UU37
3 Infantry	NN48	JJ39	Attack JJ38*
2 Armored	NN49	KK39	Attack JJ38
3 Marine	Sea Zone C	JJ45	Land, Attack JJ46
1 Marine	Sea Zone C	KK46	Land, Attack JJ46*
1 Infantry	RR50	NN48	Garrison
1 Infantry	ZZ51	YY43	Garrison
2 Armored	PP47	OO41	Attack OO40*
3 Infantry	SS45	PP41	Attack OO40
2 Armored	WW47	UU42	Attack VV42
3 Infantry	ZZ48	WW43	Attack VV42*
1 FTR	Sea Zone C	Sea Zone C	Interception
3 FTR	NN48	NN48	Patrol or Interception
2 SAC	YY43	YY43	Bomb EE25 road
2 Infantry	3 factors -- BBB54 2 factors -- RRR39 2 factors -- RRR54 1 factor -- JJJ56		Garrison Garrison Garrison Garrison

CHART 6 THE BALANCE OF FORCES								Blue (Red)
TYPE OF DIVISION	TURN							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Infantry 4-4	21 (17)	24 (20)	27 (20)	31 (24)	31 (27)	34 (31)	34 (31)	37 (35)
Marine 6-4	3 (4)	3 (4)	3 (4)	3 (4)	3 (4)	3 (4)	3 (4)	3 (4)
Artillery 8-4-4	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (5)	7 (5)	7 (6)	7 (6)	7 (6)	7 (6)
Armored 6-6	6 (7)	8 (9)	9 (11)	10 (11)	10 (13)	11 (13)	11 (13)	12 (13)
Tank/Lt Tank 4-6	4 (1)	4 (1)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)
Hvy Armor 8-6	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (3)	2 (3)	2 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)
Airborne 4-4	2 (3)	2 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)	3 (3)
Air-Assault Divisions remain the same at one each.								
Aviation Wings remain equal at six bomber and four fighter wings each.								

CHART 9 ECONOMICS CHART							
Nation	INDUSTRY					TOTALS	
	Aircraft	Naval Stores	Petro-chem	Basic Industry	None	Cities	City Hexes
BLUE	3	3	3	3	[9]	12	21
RED	3	3	3	3	[9]	12	21
Yellow	0	0	1	0	5	6	6
Green	0	1	1	1	1	4	4
Brown	0	0	0	1	2	3	3
White	0	0	1	0	2	3	3
Black	0	0	0	0	4	4	4
TOTAL	6	7	8	8	32	44	62

CHART 10 PORT CHART			
Nation	Port	Inland Port	Lake Port
BLUE	6	2	0
RED	4	1	1
Yellow	4	0	0
Green	2	0	1
Brown	0	0	1
White	0	1	0
Black	1	0	1
TOTAL	17	4	4

CHART 8 BOMBER UTILITY CHART					
Mission					Chart
	SAC	MDM	TAC	FTR	
Ground Attack:					
Strategic	X	X			BBT
Tactical		X	X		TGAT
Strafe:					
Ground Units			X	X	ACT
Air Bases				X	ACT
Bomb:					
Air Base		X	X		BBT
Port	X	X			BBT*
City-Road	X	X			BBT*
Industry	X	X			BBT*
Night	X	X			BBT**
Interdict			X	X	***
Naval Ascendancy		X	X	X	n/a
* -- any result other than no-effect succeeds ** -- as in port, road, or industrial mission *** -- see Strafe, above (on occasion) per 33.7					

Chart 7 Fighter Mission Flow Chart

