

南海

# FLASHPOINT



## SOUTH CHINA SEA



# 2-PLAYER RULES OF PLAY

GAME DESIGN  
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FLASHPOINT SERIES VOLUME I

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## INTRODUCTION

*Flashpoint: South China Sea* simulates the actions taken by the United States (US) and China to affect economic and diplomatic factors, island reclamation, freedom of navigation operations, and political warfare in the disputed region of the South China Sea after 2000. The Chinese side works to influence the claimant countries in their favor and establish Chinese territorial claims. The United States side works to maintain influence in the region while keeping China in check. The game stops short of a potential military conflict but the exercise of diplomatic and economic resources is critical to both sides in extending their influence in a conflict just short of war.

**NOTE:** This set of rules is used only when there are 2 players. If you are playing the game solo, put this booklet back in the box—you won't be using it. Instead, use the Solo Rules of Play.

## COMPONENTS

- 16 Red Wooden Cubes
- 16 Blue Wooden Cubes
- 3 Black Wooden Disks
- 1 Mounted Game Board (17" x 22")
- 1 2-Player Rules of Play (this Booklet)
- 1 Playbook
- 2 Player Aids (8.5" x 11")
- 48 Event Cards
- 7 Scoring Cards

*Solo Game Components (not used in 2-Player game):*

- 1 Solo Rules of Play
- 1 Solo Player Aid (8.5" x 11")
- 8 Solo Cards



## IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

### Available

One space each for US and China that holds cubes that may be placed by Event or Operation.

### Campaign

Represents the passage of time from six months to five years encompassed in the play of six Event cards by each player in alternating card plays.

### Campaign Track

Indicates the current Campaign.

### Chinese Reclamation (CR)

Red cubes that represent Chinese Reclamation placed on a space on Contested Islands by a CR Operation and are thus associated with a connected country.

### Contested Islands

One of three areas with conflicting claims between China and one of the claimant countries: Paracel Islands, Scarborough Shoal, and Spratly Islands. Each of the Contested Islands is connected to one country. In Contested Islands, spaces exist for FONOPs (2 US) and CR (2 Chinese).

### Country

One of five claimant countries in dispute with China in the South China Sea: Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Brunei. Each country contains designated spaces for Diplomatic and Economic Influence for both sides as well as a space for a Lock.

### Cubes

Red or blue cubes used to indicate Economic and Diplomatic Influence, Political Warfare (PW), Lock, Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP) or Chinese Reclamation (CR). Chinese cubes are red and US cubes are blue.

### Diplomatic

A type of Influence each side can place on any country.

### Economic

A type of Influence each side can place on any country.

### Enemy

Any Event or cube belonging to the opposing player (e.g., if the phasing player is representing China, any cube or Event belonging to the US is considered enemy.)

### Events

A deck of cards, each listing an Operation Value, a colored left side bar (red, blue, or black), an Event description, an Event title, a Scoring Impact, a Tension Impact, and a Mode (military, territorial or trade).

**Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP)**

Blue cubes placed that represent a US military operation, placed to demonstrate the right to free passage on a Contested Islands space by a FONOP Operation and thus associated with a country.

**Friendly**

The phasing side and any Event or cube belonging to that side (e.g. if the phasing player is representing the US, any cube or Event belonging to the US is considered friendly.)

**Influence**

Red or blue cubes either in the Diplomatic or Economic spaces of a country.

**Lock**

The result of successful Political Warfare by one side which prevents the placement of influence in a country by enemy Operation. A Lock is indicated by placing one of the phasing side's cubes on a country's Lock space (removing any enemy Lock, if present).

**Mode**

A symbol on an Event card which allows the phasing side to execute the Event or Scoring Impact on the top card of the discard pile if that card is a friendly Event card.

**Move**

Taking a cube from the first indicated space and putting it in the second indicated space.

**Operation**

Actions taken by the phasing player, expending the Operation Value of an Event card, to place or move cubes or resolve Political Warfare and then adjust Tension as needed.

**Operation Cost**

The cost to perform an Operation, which may depend on the current Tension level.

**Operation Value**

The number on an Event card that may be used by the phasing side to execute one or more Operations for the card play.

**Phasing Side**

The side currently making a card play and playing an Event card.

**Place**

Taking a cube from the Available space and putting it in the indicated space.

**Political Warfare (PW)**

An Operation to place available cubes in one of three Political Warfare spaces per side, thereby facilitating future PW Resolution to attempt to Lock a country against enemy influence Operations.

**Reserve**

One space for each side that holds cubes that may be moved to the respective Available space by Event or Operation.

**Resolve Political Warfare**

An Operation attempting to Lock a country.

**Scoring Cards**

Seven cards which start each Campaign face-up and are used to track Scoring Impacts used during the Campaign. Each Scoring card may be used only once per Campaign.

**Scoring Impact**

Indicates which Scoring card is used when the Event card is played for this action.

**Side**

Either China or US.

**Tension**

A measure of the level of antagonism between the sides. The tension level may impact whether a side can perform a selected Operation and its Operation cost.

**Tension Track**

Indicates the level of tension between the US and China.

**Victory Point (VP)**

The measure of one side's current advantage in the game, recorded on the Victory Track on the map determined by the net value of the two sides' accumulated VPs.

**Victory Point Track**

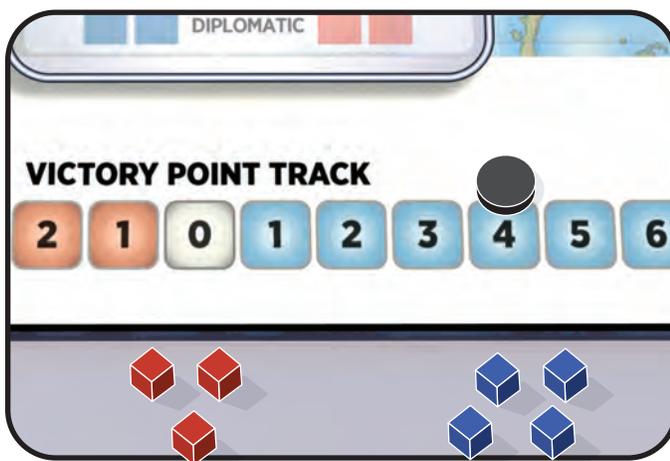
Indicates the relative number of VPs between the US and China.

**FLASHPOINT SERIES VOLUME I**

## SET-UP

- 1** Set the map in a location where both sides can reach it.
- 2** Shuffle the 48 card Event deck and place it facedown near the map. Leave space next to it to form a face-up discard pile for played cards.
- 3** Set the 7 Scoring cards face-up near the map so both players can see them. (It may be handy to place them in card number order as final scoring will be done in that order.)
- 4** Place a black disc on the “Low” space of the Tension track.
- 5** Using cubes, each player secretly bids the number of VPs they are willing to give the US player in order to play as China by placing that many cubes behind their hand (or other screen). Bidding cubes are revealed simultaneously. The player bidding the most cubes will be the Chinese player and places a black disc on the Victory Point track on the US side in the space associated with the winning bid. Ties are resolved by random selection of the Chinese player, awarding the US side the number of VPs from the tie. Return all cubes to the appropriate side.

**EXAMPLE:** Jun and Bao simultaneously bid 3 and 4 pieces respectively to be the Chinese side by exposing the cubes hidden behind their hands. Since Bao bid more, Bao will play the Chinese side and the Victory Point marker is placed on the US side on the 4.



- 6** Set the final black disc on the Campaign Track on the “1” space.
- 7** Deal each side 6 Event cards facedown.

**Note:** The players are allowed to examine their cards prior to placing influence cubes in Setup steps 8 or 9.

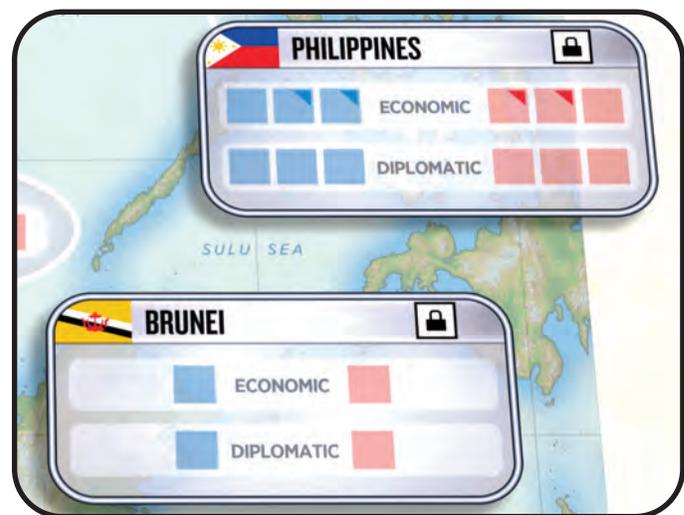
### **8** Allocate 16 Chinese cubes (red) as follows:

- Chinese Available: 4
- Chinese Reserve: 2
- Vietnam, Economic Influence: 2
- Philippines, Economic Influence: 2
- Malaysia, Economic Influence: 1
- Indonesia, Economic Influence: 1
- Add 4 Chinese cubes in Economic or Diplomatic Influence in any of the 5 Countries.

### **9** Allocate 16 US cubes (blue) as follows:

- US Available: 4
- US Reserve: 2
- Vietnam, Economic Influence: 2
- Philippines, Economic Influence: 2
- Malaysia, Economic Influence: 1
- Indonesia, Economic Influence: 1
- Add 4 US cubes in Economic or Diplomatic Influence in any of the 5 Countries.

**NOTE:** The starting Economic Influence spaces are marked on the map with a colored triangle (red or blue) in the corner.



# GAME SETUP GUIDE

The diagram illustrates the game board setup for 'Flashpoint: South China Sea'. The board features a central map of the South China Sea region with various countries and territories. Surrounding the map are player tracks for the People's Republic of China, United States of America, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. Each track includes sections for Political Warfare, Economic, and Diplomatic scores, along with available and reserve pieces. A central Victory Point Track is also present, ranging from 10 to 0 in the center. Score cards for each country are placed around the board, and a discard pile is shown at the bottom right. Numbered callouts 1-9 indicate specific setup steps: 1. Place the Victory Point Track; 2. Place the event card deck; 3. Place the score cards; 4. Place the player tracks; 5. Place the pieces; 6. Place the campaign cards; 7. Place the event card deck; 8. Place the pieces; 9. Place the pieces.

## GAME PLAY

### Sequence of Actions Each Campaign

1. The side with the fewest VPs chooses which side goes first. If the VP marker is at '0', China chooses.
2. Players alternate playing Event cards until each side's hand is empty.
3. After the first and second Campaign, reset the board by doing the following:
  - a. Deal 6 Event cards to each side, facedown.
  - b. Turn all Scoring cards face-up.
  - c. Move all Lock and FONOP cubes to that side's Available space.

**NOTE: The CR cubes will remain on the Contested Islands between Campaigns.**

  - d. Each side moves one friendly Economic Influence cube in each country to the Available space.
  - e. Move the Tension level marker one space to the left, reducing the Tension level.
  - f. Move the Campaign track marker to the next higher space.
4. After the third Campaign:
  - a. Turn all Scoring cards face-up.
  - b. Score each of the 7 Scoring cards in card number order.
  - c. Determine the winner.

If a side reaches 15 VPs (during play or during Final Scoring), they win an Instant Victory and the game is immediately over. If no Instant Victory is achieved, the side with the most VPs after three Campaigns is the winner. If the scoring marker ends in the "0" space, the game is a tie and no one wins.

## PLAYING EVENT CARDS

Each Event card can be used for one of four actions:

### Event, Operation Value, Scoring Impact, or Mode

It is then placed, face-up, on top of the discard pile. Cards in the discard pile may be reviewed but not reordered.

### Event

An Event is eligible to be played by a friendly side depending on the Operation Value's left-side bar color (red for China,

blue for US, or black for both.) Events may add or remove cubes from the map. Events are executed to the fullest extent possible. **Important:** Whenever a conflict arises between the rules and a card's text, the card takes precedence.

**NOTE: Events ignore enemy Lock restrictions for placement of influence. Change Tension for an Event if it designates a change.**

### Operation Value

Operation Values range from 1 to 3. A side may spend up to the indicated number in Operations Costs to perform one or more operations for the card play.

### Scoring Impact

If the indicated Scoring card is face-up, execute it then turn the Scoring card facedown so that it cannot be scored again during the current Campaign.

### Mode

If the top card on the Event discard pile is friendly—and the Mode matches the played Event card—execute either the discarded card's Event or Scoring Impact. Each card has one of three Modes:



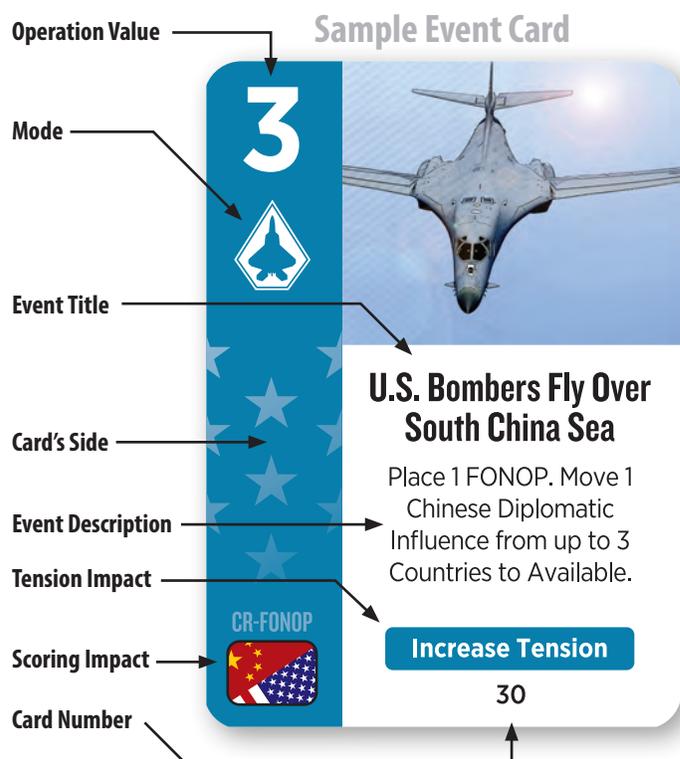
Military



Territorial



Trade



## INFLUENCE

Cubes removed from the map during play are returned to Available. If an Event or Operation calls for placing one or more cubes and none are in the Available space, the phasing player may move friendly cubes from in play (anywhere but from the Reserve) to Available as necessary to fulfill the need.

Cubes placed in a country can represent either Diplomatic or Economic Influence.

Influence cubes may only be placed in spaces shaded for that side: blue ■ for US, and red ■ for China. If a type (Diplomatic or Economic) of Influence is specified by an Event, then the influence cube must be placed in that type of space.

If one side has a Lock on a country, the enemy may not place influence cubes in that country by Operation (but placement via an Event is allowed). The side with a Lock may place influence in that country as normal.

**NOTE:** The presence of a Lock in no way limits either side's ability to place a FONOP or CR cube in the associated Contested Islands or to replace an enemy Lock through successful Political Warfare.

## TENSION TRACK

The Tension Track measures the level of antagonism between China and US in the region. Tension can change due to Events and Operations and will decrease at the end of each Campaign. An instruction to "Increase Tension" moves the Tension marker toward Critical, if possible. "Decrease Tension" moves the Tension marker toward Low, if possible.

Whenever the Tension level changes from Low, Medium, or High to Critical (by Operation or Event), the side playing the Event card must move one cube from Available to Reserve. If they have no cubes in Available, they must move one of their Diplomatic Influence cubes to Reserve instead (if possible).



**EXAMPLE:** Bao plays card #23 "PLAN's Wu: Beijing Won't Stop South China Sea Island Reclamation" and executes the Event. This event directs Bao to place

one CR if China has 2 CRs in place (which it does in the Paracel Islands). Bao places the CR in Scarborough Shoal. The card also directs Bao to increase Tension to Critical (from Low). Since Tension changed to Critical, Bao must move a cube from Available to Reserve.

Tension changes in the following ways:

- Events change Tension only if expressly stated.
- Placement of a FONOP during an Operation increases Tension one level.
- Placement of a CR during an Operation increases Tension one level.
- A successful PW Resolution increases Tension one level.
- During reset between Campaigns, Tension is reduced one level.

The Tension level limits certain Operations and may affect Operation Costs.

If the Tension level is at Critical, then no PW Resolution is possible and no FONOP or CR may be placed by Operation. (Events are not limited by the Tension level.)

## OPERATIONS

Each Event card has an Operation Value of 1, 2 or 3. When playing a card to execute Operations, any mix of Operations may be performed, up to the total Operations Value of the card. Each side has a variety of Operations that may be performed for their Operation Cost.

These Operations may be executed in any order. After each individual Operation is executed, Tension must be adjusted per the Operation. An Operation may be repeated after any change in Tension called for by the prior Operation, if any unspent Operation Value remains.

### LIST OF OPERATIONS:

#### A. Place 1 Influence cube in Economic or Diplomatic

Spend 1 Operation Value to place 1 influence cube, either Economic or Diplomatic, in a country that is not Locked by the enemy.

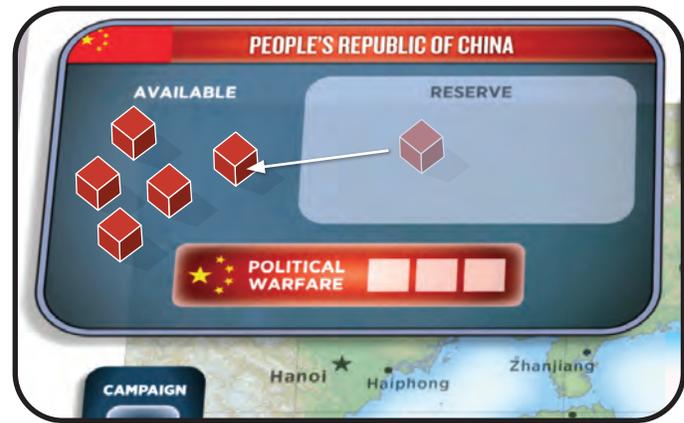
**EXAMPLE:** Jun performs an Operation—**Place 1 Influence cube in Economic or Diplomatic**. Spending one Operation Value, Jun can place one cube from Available to Diplomatic Influence in the Philippines. *This would not be possible if the Philippines was locked by the Chinese.*



#### B. Move 1 cube from Reserve to Available

Spend 1 Operation Value to move 1 cube from Reserve to Available.

**EXAMPLE:** Bao performs an Operation—**Move 1 cube from Reserve to Available**. Spending one Operation Value, Bao moves one cube from Reserve to Available.



#### C. Place 1 Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP) and Increase Tension

If Tension is not Critical, the US may spend 1 Operation Value to place a cube in a FONOP space. Increase Tension by 1.

**EXAMPLE:** Jun performs an Operation—**Place 1 Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP) and Increase Tension**. Spending one Operation Value, Jun places one cube from Available to FONOP in Scarborough Shoal. Jun then increases Tension from High to Critical (a requirement of the FONOP Operation). As a result of Tension changing to Critical on Jun's Event card play, Jun must move one cube from Available to Reserve.



#### D. Place 1 Chinese Reclamation (CR) and Increase Tension

If Tension is not Critical, China may spend 1, 2 or 3 Operation Value to place a cube in a CR space. The Operation Cost depends on Tension as follows:

- At Low Tension – Operation Cost 1, increase Tension by 1.
- At Medium Tension – Operation Cost 2, increase Tension by 1.

- At High Tension – Operation Cost 3, increase Tension by 1. (Remember to move a cube from Available to Reserve if possible, or from Diplomatic Influence to Reserve.)

**EXAMPLE:** Bao performs an Operation—**Place 1 Chinese Reclamation (CR) and Increase Tension.** Spending two Operation Value (since Tension starts at Medium), Bao moves one cube from Available to CR in Scarborough Shoal. Bao then increases Tension from Medium to High (a requirement of the Chinese Reclamation Operation).



**E. Place 1 Political Warfare**

Spend 1 Operation Value to place 1 cube in a Political Warfare space.

**EXAMPLE:** Bao performs an Operation—**Place 1 Political Warfare.** Spending one Operation Value, Bao moves one cube from Available to Political Warfare.



**F. Resolve Political Warfare**

If Tension is not Critical and a side has at least 1 Political Warfare cube in place, they may choose to Resolve Political Warfare. This is a zero-cost Operation.

**Turn the top card of the Event deck face-up:**

- If the Operation Value of the card is greater than the number

of their PW cubes, then the attempt was **unsuccessful.**

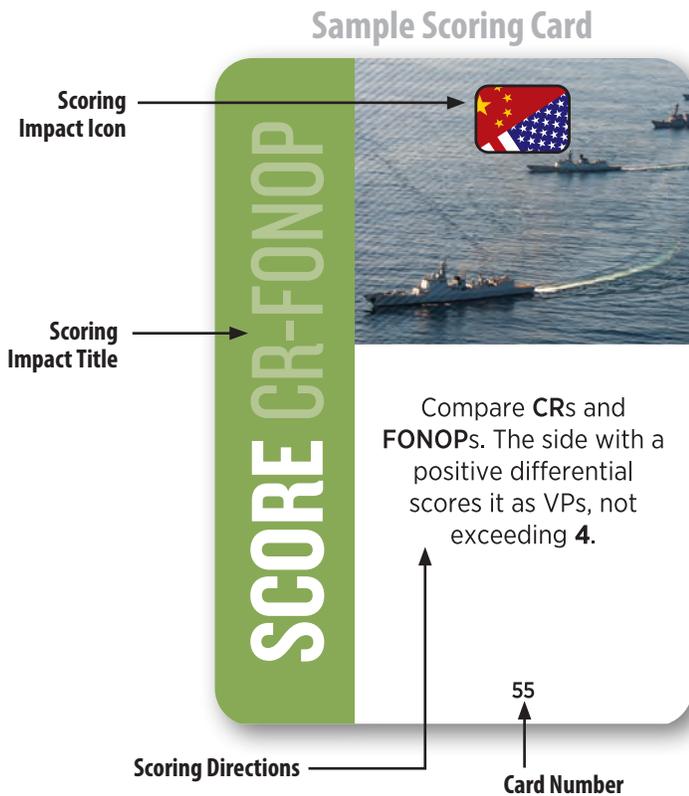
- Move all of that side’s PW cubes to Available.
- Place the Event card facedown on the bottom of the Event deck.
- If the Operation Value of the card is equal to or less than the number of their PW cubes, then the attempt was **successful.**
  - Move all of that side’s PW cubes to Available.
  - Select a country to Lock.
  - If there is an enemy cube on that country’s Lock, move it to the enemy’s Available space.
  - Place a friendly cube on the country’s Lock.
  - Move either all enemy Diplomatic or all enemy Economic Influence cubes from that country to Available.
  - Increase Tension by 1.
  - Place the Event card facedown on the bottom of the Event deck.

**EXAMPLE:** Bao performs an Operation—**Resolve Political Warfare.** Spending zero Operation Value (as this operation has no cost), Bao turns the top card of the Event deck exposing card #25 “Chinese Jets Intercept US ‘Sniffer’ Aircraft,” with an Operations Value of 2. Since Bao has two Political Warfare cubes in place and the card is less than or equal to two, the Operation is a **success.** The two Political Warfare cubes are moved to Available and Vietnam is selected for this operation. If there was an enemy Lock in Vietnam, it would be removed to US Available. Bao moves one cube from Available to Vietnam Lock. Then, Bao elects to remove all US Economic cubes in the space to US Available. Since the Political Warfare was a success, Tension must increase from Medium to High. Lastly, Bao places card #25 on the bottom of the Event Deck facedown.



## SCORING CARDS

When an Event card is played for its Scoring Impact, execute the directions on the Scoring card matching that title, then turn the Scoring card face-down. Once facedown, the Scoring card can't be selected again until after being reset at the end of a Campaign.



**NOTE:** A Scoring card will result in the same VP awards regardless of the phasing player's side.

### Score Countries

The countries are scored by totaling each side's cubes in the country named on the Scoring card. This includes all Economic and Diplomatic Influence, the Lock, and FONOP and CR cubes on Contested Islands if attached to the named country. The side with a positive differential scores that difference in VPs, not exceeding the limit stated on the Scoring card.

**EXAMPLE:** Bao plays the Event card #18 "Vietnam Grants Indian Firm ONGC Videsh Drilling Rights" and chooses to Score Vietnam. Bao compares Chinese and US cubes as the "Score Vietnam" Scoring Card directs. Vietnam has seven Chinese cubes (including cubes in the connected Paracel Islands and the Lock). The US has four cubes in Vietnam and the connected Paracel Islands. The side with the positive differential is China and thus China receives 3 VPs. Card #18 is put on the top of

the discard pile and the Score Vietnam card (#52) is turned facedown beside the map.

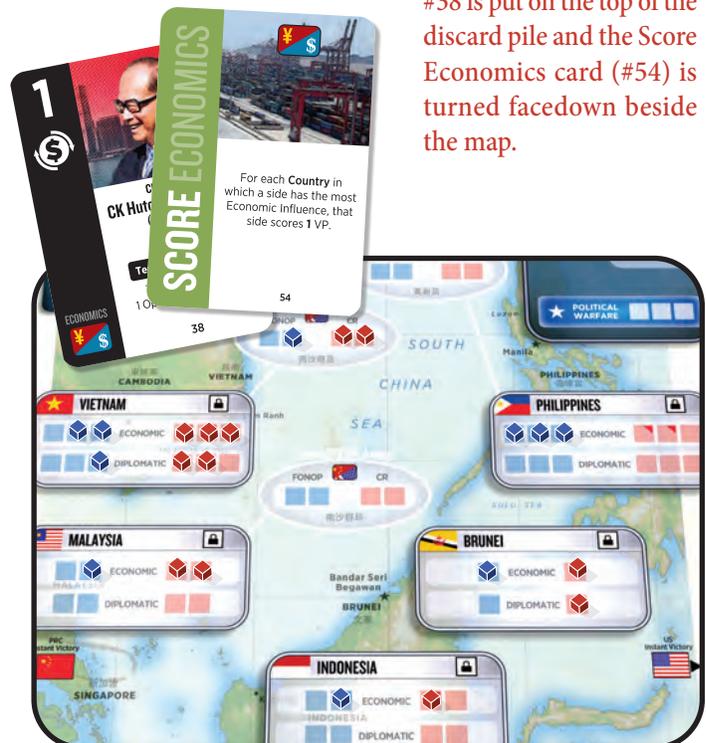


### Score Economics

Each side scores 1 VP for each country in which they have the most Economic Influence cubes.

**EXAMPLE:** Bao plays the Event card #38 "Chairman of CK Hutchison Holdings Li Ka-shing" and chooses to Score Economics. As the "Score Economics" Scoring Card directs, each side will score 1 VP for each Country in which they have the most Economic Influence. China receives 1 VP for Vietnam and Malaysia. US receives 1 VP for Philippines. Neither receives VPs for Indonesia or Brunei as Economic Influence is tied.

Card #38 is put on the top of the discard pile and the Score Economics card (#54) is turned facedown beside the map.



### Score CR - FONOP

Compare the totals of all CR cubes to all FONOP cubes on all Contested Islands. The side with a positive differential scores it as VPs, not to exceed 4.

**EXAMPLE:** Bao plays the Event card #28 “Chinese Blockade BRP Sierra Madre on Second Thomas Shoal” and chooses to Score CR-FONOP. As the “Score CR-FONOP” Scoring Card directs, compare CRs to FONOPs. China has a positive differential of 2 (five CR minus three FONOP). China Scores 2 VPs net. Card #28 is put on the top of the discard pile and the Score Economics card (#55) is turned facedown beside the map.



### SCORING AND VICTORY

Victory Points can result from the play of Scoring cards and from some Event cards.

#### The Victory Point Track

Shows a range of scoring possibilities from US “15” (US Instant Victory) to China “15” (Chinese Instant Victory).

**EXAMPLE:** If the VP marker is on the China “1” space and the US scores two VPs, the VP marker should move two spaces toward the US side, ending in the US “1” space.



### Instant Victory

If a player reaches 15 VPs, the game ends immediately and that player is the winner.

### End-Game Victory

If no Instant Victory is achieved (during play or during Final Scoring), the side with the most VPs after three Campaigns is the winner. If the scoring marker ends in the 0 space, the game is a tie and no one wins.

## INTERESTING STUFF

### #FSCSgame

#### Playlists from Spotify:

- Flashpoint: South China Sea - Tension is LOW



- Flashpoint: South China Sea - Tension is MEDIUM



- Flashpoint: South China Sea - Tension is HIGH



### Discord Server

For discussion of *South China Sea* and others in the *Flashpoint* series: <https://discord.gg/CQ2avAzvTY>



# OPERATIONS COST

OPERATION	PREREQUISITE	At Tension Level			
		LOW	MED	HIGH	CRIT
Place <b>1</b> Influence cube in <b>Economic</b> or <b>Diplomatic</b>	Not Enemy Locked	1	1	1	1
Move <b>1</b> cube from <b>Reserve</b> to <b>Available</b>	-	1	1	1	1
Place <b>1</b> FONOP and <b>Increase Tension*</b>	Tension not Critical	1	1	1	Not Possible
Place <b>1</b> CR and <b>Increase Tension*</b>	Tension not Critical	1	2	3	Not Possible
Place <b>1</b> Political Warfare	-	1	1	1	1
Resolve PW / Move PW to Available <b>If Success:</b> Lock a country, Increase Tension and move all enemy <b>Diplomatic</b> or <b>Economic</b> Influence cubes there to <b>Available*</b>	At Least 1 PW Tension not Critical	0	0	0	Not Possible

\* Whenever Tension changes to Critical, the side playing the Event card must move 1 cube from Available to Reserve, or move 1 Diplomatic Influence to Reserve (if possible).

## Sequence of Actions Each Campaign

1. The side with the fewest VPs chooses which side goes first. If the VP marker is at '0', China chooses.
2. Alternate playing Event cards until each side's hand is empty.
3. After the first and second Campaign, reset the board by doing the following:
  - a. Deal 6 Event cards to each side, facedown
  - b. Turn all Scoring cards face-up
  - c. Move all Lock and FONOP cubes to that side's Available space. (**NOTE:** The CR cubes will remain on the Contested Islands between Campaigns.)
  - d. Each side moves one friendly Economic Influence cube in each country to that side's Available space
  - e. Move the Tension level marker one space to the left, reducing the Tension level
  - f. Move the Campaign track marker to the next higher space
4. After the third Campaign:
  - a. Turn all Scoring cards face-up
  - b. Score each of the seven Scoring cards in card number order
  - c. Determine the winner

If a side reaches 15 VPs (during play or during Final Scoring), they win an Instant Victory and the game is immediately over. If no Instant Victory is achieved, the side with the most VPs after three Campaigns is the winner. If the scoring marker ends in the 0 space, the game is a tie and no one wins.



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