

# *The East is Red: Optional Rules*

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Congratulations on *The East is Red*. The game helps to demolish the myth of Soviet invincibility. It's a pleasure to see that Russian steamroller grind to a halt just short of that critical rail bottleneck in game after game.

Although I agree with most of the decisions you made in the design of the game, I'd like to suggest a few revisions, alternate scenarios and optional rules that might add realism or variety.

## *I. SOVIET AIRBORNE TROOPS*

As the article points out, the USSR is likely to use its paratroops to seize key points in Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia, but they might also be employed on the main front. This is similar to the choice faced by the German player in *France: 1940*; to use paratroops "historically" off the board in North Holland, or to pay a penalty and use them on the board. The USSR has 7 airborne divisions (7000 men, 4S SP guns each) and the airlift capacity to transport two of them simultaneously for a distance of 1600 km (32 hexes). Some of these troops would be committed on other fronts, but the following rules seem credible:

### (22.0) SOVIET AIRBORNE TROOPS

The Soviet Player has four 1-2-3 airborne divisions. Beginning on the second Turn they may be "dropped" at a rate of two per movement phase anywhere in clear terrain free of enemy Zones

of Control within 16 hexes of a Soviet city or Air Force unit. Each airborne division requires the support of one Air Force unit for the drop. The Air Force unit may not execute any other mission on that Game Turn.

### (22.1) AIR DROP RESTRICTIONS

(22.12) Airborne divisions may not be dropped onto Industrial hexes unless they have been destroyed.

(22.13) Airborne divisions may not be dropped onto Chinese major cities unless they are already occupied by the Soviet Player.

### (22.2) AIRBORNE SUPPLY

Soviet Airborne units are automatically in supply during the Turn they are dropped. Thereafter they are subject to normal supply restrictions.

### (22.3) AIRBORNE UNIT MOVEMENT

(22.31) An airborne unit may not move during the Phase it is dropped. Thereafter it moves as a normal non-mechanized unit.

(22.32) Airborne units have no Zone of Control. They may not combine with other divisions to build up corps-sized units.

## *II. MONGOLIAN FORCES*

The 28,000-man Mongolian Army will probably be committed to border patrol and local security duties within the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR), but it might participate in a Soviet

offensive. This force consists of two mechanized divisions (a third in reserve) with obsolete Soviet equipment. The following rule provides for them:

### (23.0) MONGOL FORCES

In any scenario the Soviet Player may deploy a 2-3-6 Mongol Corps anywhere within Mongolia. The Corps moves as a mechanized unit and traces its supply lines as a normal Soviet unit.

## *III. INDIAN AND NATIONALIST CHINESE INTERVENTION*

"Hawks" within the Indian government might take advantage of China's preoccupation with a Soviet attack to launch an offensive to recover the territories along the Himalayan borderlands occupied by China in 1965. The USSR has provided India with lavish amounts of military equipment, partially in the hope of such an event. The large Nationalist Army on Taiwan might also see a golden opportunity for an assault along the China Coast. This would not be a serious attempt at "reconquest of the Mainland," but more likely a limited operation to gain a bargaining counter for any subsequent postwar negotiations. The effect of such "stabs in the back" would be twofold: they would divert Chinese reinforcements from the Manchurian battlefield, and they would tie up rolling stock needed to move men and equipment to meet new threats. The possibility

of such outside intervention can be represented in the game by die rolls as in *Sinai* or *Winter War*. The following rule is only a tentative suggestion:

#### (24.0) THIRD POWER INTERVENTION

(24.1) At the end of the first turn, and each turn thereafter, the Chinese Player rolls a die to determine whether or not India will enter the war. If the result is a "1", the Chinese Player loses his Reinforcements for the next Turn, and during that Turn his rail movement capacity is reduced to one unit.

(24.2) Each time the Soviet Player captures a Chinese major city he rolls a die. A roll of "1" or "2" means that the Chinese Nationalists have entered the war. The Chinese Player loses his Reinforcements and his rail movement capacity is reduced to one unit for the next 2 Game Turns. (24.3) The effect of Third Power Intervention is cumulative, i.e., if the Indian and Nationalist entry occurs on the same turn, or adjacent turns, the Chinese loss of Reinforcements and rail capacity continues for three Turns.

#### IV. AIR INTERDICTION

An "air interdiction" phase appears in the rules at (4.2) but no Air Strike Markers are provided, and no rule is given for interdiction. I assume this reflects a judgment during the last phase of game design that the Chinese railway troops (11 divisions) can keep the trains running in spite of the Soviet Air Force. This is not unreasonable, since the best efforts of the US Air Force and Navy could not keep the Chinese and North Vietnamese from running trains into Hanoi. It

might also just mean that you decided Soviet doctrine on tactical air power lays much greater emphasis on direct support than on interdiction. If we make a few assumptions, however, I think we can salvage the rule and keep that Interdiction Phase. Permit interdiction only in rough terrain rail hexes, where tunnels, cuts and narrow defiles are easily subject to blockage. Rough terrain makes it difficult or impossible to lay track around an obstacle, and hard to clear train wrecks. Since an interdiction campaign would use up a great deal of ordnance and might suffer heavy losses to ground-based air defenses, we can limit the Soviet Player to a few interdictions and require that they be directed against different hexes each turn (reflecting the likelihood that air defenses would concentrate at sectors under attack.)

#### (25.0) AIR INTERDICTION

The Soviet Player has four Air Strike Markers which become available on Turn 3 at a rate of one Marker per turn. They may be accumulated. Air Strike Markers may only be placed on rough terrain rail hexes during the Air Interdiction Phase of the Soviet player-turn. Their effect is to negate the railroad in that hex. They remain in place until the Air Interdiction Phase of the following Game Turn. A hex may only be interdicted once in the course of a game. All units may freely enter interdicted hexes, subject to normal supply and movement restrictions. Each interdiction requires the support of one Air Force unit, which may not execute any other mission in that Game Turn.

#### (25.1) RANGE OF

#### INTERDICTION

To interdict a Chinese rail hex, the Soviet Player must have an Air Force unit within 16 hexes of the target hex.

#### V. SOVIET INTELLIGENCE

Requiring the Soviet Player to deploy first gives the Chinese Player the benefit of superior Strategic intelligence. This seems unrealistic. The USSR has substantial capabilities for satellite and aerial photo-reconnaissance (this, after all, is one of the main reasons for the development of the high-flying Mig-25 Foxbat, as shown in the Middle East). Soviet intelligence, moreover, had over ten years to develop a network of informants within the PLA and it is unlikely that the Chinese have been completely successful in rooting it out. True, the Soviet deployment will be cumbersome and time-consuming, but the Soviet Army is still more mobile strategically than the PLA. Chinese units, even on limited alert, must be quite sedentary - many grow their own food, engage in "civic action" and sideline occupations and have local political tasks and commitments. Even if the Chinese knowledge of Russian deployment were flawless, it would take time to shift forces around to meet it. This can readily be represented by an optional variant to rule (17.2):

#### (17.23) OPTIONAL DEPLOYMENT MODIFICATIONS

If the Players agree, the Chinese Player may deploy his forces (including the placement of ADM's) first, to reflect the Soviet advantage of superior

intelligence. Alternatively, the Chinese Player may wait until the Soviet Player has deployed before committing his ADM's (compact nuclear warheads

can be shifted about in a pre-crisis period more easily than armies).

## VI. CLIMATE

No sane commander would care to campaign in a Manchurian winter, but we are dealing with a situation that already strains the limits of sanity, and we should remember that both the Red Army and the PLA have considerable experience in winter warfare. The game assumes a Summer campaign, but if the Soviet attack comes in the Autumn, those Chinese militiamen will be busy threshing the Kaoliang and cutting the hemp. A ten week campaign would then bring us right into the savage Manchurian winter. Now the average North Chinese soldier is just as hardy as his Siberian counterpart, but the latter is likely to be better clad, fed and equipped for subzero weather. Frozen rivers facilitate tank crossings, but deep snow imposes severe hardships on the foot soldier. The CIA *Atlas of China* compares the climate of Manchuria to that of Alberta or Minnesota. The effects of an early freeze on an Autumn campaign can be represented in several ways. We might restrict or prohibit mechanized movement in rough terrain. We could negate the movement cost of river crossing but reduce the movement allowance of all units by one or two points. Chinese militia units could be restricted to cities and industrial areas to reflect the difficulty of billeting such raw troops in the harsh winter

countryside. "General Winter" has often been on the side of the Russian Army, but players can experiment with various climate rules seeking a reasonable balance.

## VII. MINOR NOTES ON TERRAIN

Most maps, including the CIA *Atlas of China* and the official Chinese *Zhong Hua Ren Min Gong He Guo Di Tu* (Peking, 1971) show the salient of Manchuria that points toward Khabarovsk as swamp. This would include hexes 3822, 3723, 3823 and 3623 at least. There are roads in the area, but wouldn't mechanized units be at some disadvantage in such terrain (such as losing their Zone of Control)?

Because the situation is so hypothetical (and let us hope that it remains so) *The East is Red* invites Players to experiment, devise new rules and improvise, to reflect their own judgments of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet and Chinese armed forces. I hope we can look forward to a wide variety of revisions, modifications and options to the game proposed by the readers in future issues of *Moves*.

-Mark Markowitz