

OIL WAR

Strategy & Tactics

For the benefit of new subscribers, Oil War is a game of the hypothetical attempt by the United States and various other nations to land forces in the Persian Gulf oil-producing countries, and seize the very vital oilwells and ports. This article discusses the best strategy and tactics for both players.

American play is dependant on the initial set-up of the Arab player, so I will deal with this first. One modification must be made to the O.B. The Kuwait armoured Brigade value 2, should be made into a 7 value unit, the same as the Iranian armoured Brigades, the reason for this is the 150 Chieftain Tanks, that Britain has agreed to supply to Kuwait.

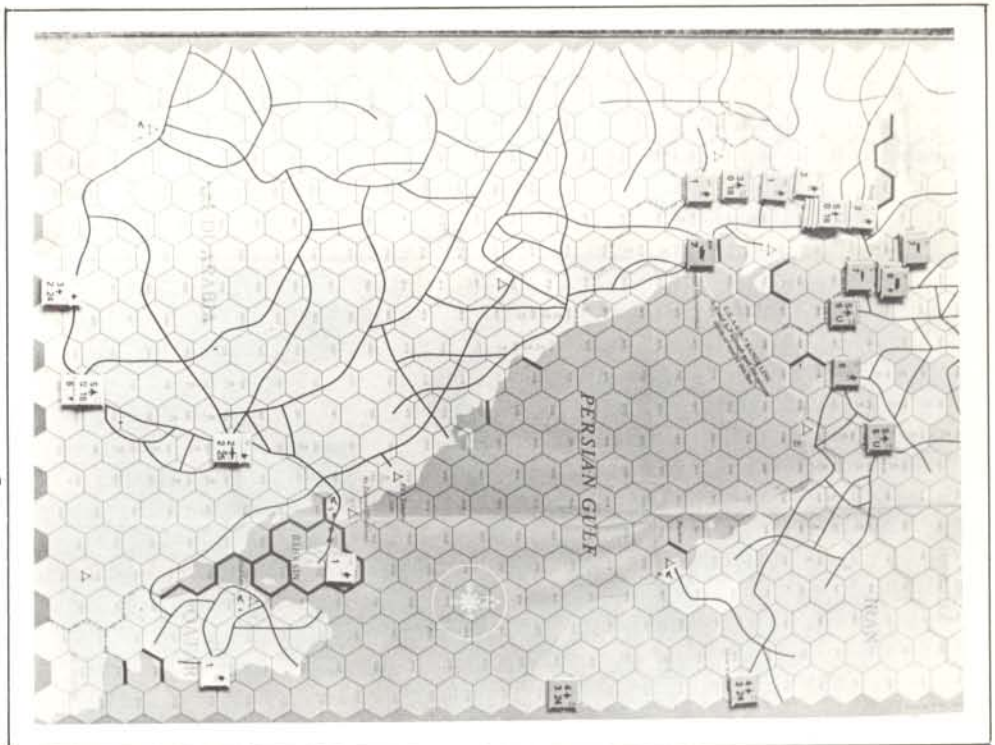


From the Arab point of view, at the start, the airfields are the only place to position forces. Iran is unlikely to be invaded, with all the Iranian forces available there. The same holds for Iraq and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia and /or Qatar therefore are the prime targets.

Here is the best (to my mind) set-up for the Arabs:

	Hex No.	Units
Saudi Arabia	1324	one SA 4, one SA 167
	1128	one SA 6(mech), one SA Lightning
Kuwait	0828	one SA 4, one SA F5
	0509	one KW 1
	0510	one KW Lightning
	0511	one KW 1
Iraq	0711	one KW 7(Armoured)
	0607	two IQ 4's (mech), one SU7, one M21
	0606	one IQ 4(mech), one IQ 3
Iran	0508	one IQ 3
	0805	two IN 8(mech)
	0806	two IN 7(arm)
	0705	two IN 7(arm)
	1107	one IN 6
	0907	one IN F4
	1306	one IN F4
Qatar	2115	one IN F5
	2110	one IN F5
Bahrain	2024	one QT 1
	1721	one BH 1

As can be observed the Kuwait forces are taking no chances, if all the airfields were left unoccupied it would be a good opportunity for the US forces.



Arab Initial Deployment

As soon as the American/Israeli forces have landed, the Arab forces should be sent to the area and try and hold them. On the way, the Arabs should try and move in single stacks, until actual combat occurs or they end up less than a move away from the Americans. The reason for this is that if the Americans bomb a stack of two units, say fours, they need only twenty-eight to remove the units with certainty, at +20 odds, but to remove two separate fours, they need twenty-four on each, a total of forty-eight.

The airfields at Riyadh (0326) and Az Zahran (1521) are left unoccupied at the start, their Sam-bases will prevent American/Israeli/EEC Air-landing troops from flying in, but these could land adjacent and march in. Hexes 1419 and 0816 are bad places to land, being between two forces the American is almost forced to attack hexes 1324, 1128, or 0828. But by benefit of the aircraft on top of these bases, even if shot down, the Arab in his turn can place more aircraft over the bases to prevent the American bringing in any reinforcements.

From about move 4 on, Iranian reinforcements should be kept back, instead of going forward, and positioned about 4 hexes from the coast, around hexes 0514, 0515 to stop the Marines easily marching in and capturing the ports/oil facilities nearby.

Little more can be said about the Arab's strategy and tactics, beyond the obvious: going for the American ground troops, and the F-111's, and if the Americans do break out, the Arabs must try and contest as many objectives as possible.

American Strategy

For the American to get at least a marginal victory, one port and fifteen oil facilities, must be captured. The port is quite easy to

capture, by dropping an air-landing unit on Bahrain.

Here is the move one, for the Americans, against the best defence. Israeli air-landing units land on hexes 1028 and 1227, surrounding the six value mechanised infantry unit and easily destroying it, an A6 and an A7 aircraft are sent to hexes 2024, and 1728. The rest of the aircraft, all F4s attack the Saudi Arabian Lightning and F5, having a 50:50 chance of getting each.

If the Arab, in his turn attacks the two Israeli units with all available units including the two Iranian F4s, he will only have +0 odds on them, with a one third chance of success, so it is likely that he would pull back his forces instead.

In the American's next turn, he should land one of the Brigades in Bahrain, and capture the port. Also he should land two Brigades on 1728, move one unit off and bring back the A7, to cover the airfield. By about move 4 he should be locked in combat with the Arab and unless he is unlucky, inexperienced, or plays badly, he should be pushing the Arab back by move 6.

If it goes badly, he may have to land the Marines as near as possible, to help or if he is on top, the ports and oil facilities, if unguarded provide a very good target. If guarded, a landing in 1609 and subsequent movement on move 7 may give him a chance of capturing some oil facilities and even the port on 1308.

Overall the 1st scenario is quite well balanced, but in the 2nd scenario, I feel that the Victory Conditions should be reduced in favour of the American.

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