An opportune article on a game that has been with us for a while and thus very suitable in the light of my editorial. More of them say I!

Fulda Gap

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THERMOPYLAE OR MARATHON?

On first examining 'Fulda Gap', SPI's Soviet vs. NATO game, one receives the impression that it is a Russian pushover and that the NATO player is there strictly for laughs. On first playing it, especially if play is a solitaire try-out, one then begins to suspect that *both* players are faced with Operation Impossible, the Soviet doomed to irrevocable aggression against a thin but elastic and unpierceable screen (and when he does pierce it his supplies run out) and NATO condemned to scurrey breathlessly from crisis to crisis as the Red tide flows inexorably over, round and through his sieve-like front (and only) line. Well, these impressions can't be both right and this article is intended to offer some ideas to both sides, with the newcomer to this highly interesting and ever-fresh game particularly in mind.

That being the case, the scenario which will be used as the basis will be the cliff-hanger Tripwire one wherein a surprise Soviet attack, with NATO forces still in their peace-time locations, is postulated and the period covered is D-Day to D+6 at 24 hours per turn. It is also assumed that the so-called basic game is being played, without air or nuclear rules; newcomers would certainly be wise to master the main play-sequence first before building in 'extras' and in any case the 'basic' game is pretty good in itself. (However, some comments on use of air units and nuclear weapons will be included as a special section to provide some guide as to what is likely to happen.)

Parts of the article, especially that part dealing with Turn 1 are rather detailed and sometimes reference to a hex number has had to be made: this is not a very popular practice and I apologise in advance. Nonetheless Turn 1 deployment is very important for both sides and one of the main objects is to help the newcomer to "FG" to find his way to the initial moves which suit his plans best: it is all too easy to muff on this turn and lose some good opportunities as a result.

FORCE EVALUATION

Warsaw Pact: The Warsaw pact forces have considerable numerical superiority - thirteen divisions to seven on Turn 1, breaking down into seven tank and six motor rifle divisions – with the advantage of increased options which this brings. As the whole force comes on at once and as there are no restrictions about points of entry, other than that entry must be in East German territory (¾ of the east map-edge), the WP player can allocate his forces to suit his strategy and has Divisional Integrity for all divisions from the word 'go'. Once on the board and committed to battle, his Accelerated Assault option, applicable at will, and his being in automatic supply for the first five turns, are both contributory to maintenance of the momentum of the assault. This can be given further impetus by the option to use Chemical Warfare at any time up to Turn 5; it is akin to being able to put on knuckledusters at the moment when one's opponent seems at his groggiest.

On the debit side comes first the 'brittleness' of the WP units; not only are they too uniformly liable to lose at least one step on being committed to combat for the first time but step-losses entail a marked falling-off in CF – tank regiments lost 50% of their attack CF with the first step, motor rifle regiments 66%! There are no sure-fire opening gambits in this game. Next comes the inhibiting effect of the Soviet Doctrine rule, allowing only westward movement during the second movement phase and thus doing much to prevent proper exploitation of opportunities arising as a result of combat – and making it quite impossible to launch hit-and-run local attacks. Third comes the sketchy supply system available to the WP player once his automatic supply has expired; he can confidently expect part of his assault to find itself out of supply (usually in the southern sector) with the crippling effect on movement and combat which that entails. Lastly comes the imbalance in attack/defence CF of WP units – tank regiments are strong in attack, weak in defence and motor rifle regiments are vice versa.

The conclusions offered are: over-insure numerically when allocating divisions to a task; aim at having NATO on the ropes by the end of Turn 5, using Accelerated Assault and CW as aids but don't overdo the former – keep the increase low; use balanced groups of tank and rifle divisions; and mount the main effort in sectors where the sketchy supply system can best aid it over the last two turns.

NATO: NATO brigades make up (to some extent) in quality what they lack in quantity. CFs are generally good and there is a fair balance between attack and defence capability; furthermore, losses do not entail a sharp drop in combat effectiveness. Added to this is the ability of most units to rebuild lost steps, an ability especially good in the case of German units; the NATO player can more readily accept a step-loss in lieu of retreat. Absence of any restriction on movement (other than the usual terrain 'ZOC ones) makes the NATO force well able to react to the situation and, above all, to lunge, strike and fall back to the 'en garde'.

The first and greatest disadvantage is sheer lack of numbers; there are simply not enough units to cover all possible lines of approach adequately. This is exacerbated by the fact that at the game's start four of the seven divisions available are either so spread out or so far to the rear that they will not be ready for combat as complete formations on Turn 1 nor the WP combat phase of Turn 2; only the Wurzburg sector can be called strongly-garrisoned. Supply, or rather the dependence on supply lines from Turn 4 onwards, can prove a disadvantage. While there are sufficient supply units and a good road system, there will be grave problems if the WP forces have been able to disrupt it, even if the attackers are rounded up and destroyed. In addition, both German Supply Units are in areas which are likely to be captured eventually.

Conclusions; be very careful over initial deployment - simply to contain the first rush will be a boon; get all divisions concentrated as quickly as possible and attempt nothing adventurous until this is done; make best use of terrain to boost your already good defensive CF; and start moving back exposed Supply Units on Turn 1, where resources allow this.

STRATEGIES

Warsaw Pact Strategy

Strategies are dictated by Victory Conditions; in 'Fulda Gap' the acquisition of Victory Points in varying degrees of excess over one's opponent. The WP player gains VPs for (1) having units on the west bank of the Rhine able to trace a L of C as at the game's end, (2) for being in sole (100 pts.) or partial (50) control of the Rhine Valley autobahn – note that failure to obtain at least partial control hands NATO 100 pts. on a plate - and (3) for eliminating NATO units (doubled if the unit was surrounded at the moment of elimination). Let me say now that (1) is a very difficult goal to achieve due to the dependence on having a clear L of C along either the Frankfurt-Kassel or the Frankfurt-Wurzburg-Fulda autobahn (see Rule 21.3); it takes only one NATO unit holding out in the wrong hex or even a sudden airmobile raid in Turn 7, to cut the autobahn and with it the L of C. Similarly, complete control of the Rhine autobahn is going to be equally elusive but partial control is not merely a likelihood, it is a must; therefore (2) + (3) is the advised objective; The WP overall strategy thus becomes Penetration of the Line, a strategy requiring pressure at several points in order to stretch and pin the enemy force, a strong vigorous attack at the chosen point of penetration and the passing of a strong reserve force through the gap thus created to take the enemy flanks in rear and to exploit the breakthrough. In 'Fulda Gap' the WP forces, strong as they are, are not limitless and the following pattern is recommended:

1. A major thrust at the chosen point of penetration.
2. A secondary thrust, the success of which will aid the main one.
3. A holding operation to tie down remaining NATO forces.

A look at the map indicates three possible axes of advance – the Kassel-Siegen-Bonn route in the north, the Fulda Gap in the centre, divided into two sub-axes, the autobahn via Giessen and the Fulda-Frankfurt road, and finally the Wurzburg-Mainz route in the south . Of these, the northern route runs through rough, virtually roadless terrain where a comparatively small force could hold up an offensive beyond hope of success: the centre has many advantages, including proximity to the East German frontier and two east-west roads, but becomes an increasingly narrow funnel through rough terrain, a funnel blocked by the highly-defensible Mainz-Frankfurt-Darmstadt urban area: and the Wurzburg routes' advantages of choice of east-west roads, lateral communucation and shortest distance to the Rhine are offset by the good defensive terrain through which they run and, more importantly, the difficulty of assembling a large force opposite Wurzburg due to the rough and forest terrain between the city and East Germany, to say nothing of the distance (the Soviet Doctrine rule precludes best use of the autobahn).

The 'recommended pattern' superimposed on the terrain is suggested to be a major thrust through the Fulda Gap using the Fulda-Frankfurt road and the terrain immediately to its north as the main axis, a secondary thrust through Wurzburg and the holding thrust along both the Kassel-Marburg axis and the Giessen autobahn.

NATO Strategy

This has two objectives – first, keep the Warsaw Pact forces from ever getting as far east as the Rhine Valley autobahn, let alone the river itself and secondly, inflict as many casualties as possible in the process. It should take the form of a flexible defence anchored on the Marburg area in the north and on Wurzburg in the south, a defence which can bend but which must not break and which must be based on conducting fierce local counter-offensives to draw the teeth, one by one, of the WP assault. Forget about VPs for exiting units off the east map-edge.

TACTICS

Warsaw Pact

Suggested grouping and Turn 1 deployment of the WP divisions are as follows:

Northern Front: One tank and two rifle divisions plus one artillery unit entering well north of Eisenach. Of these, the tank and one rifle division move to attack the 4th (GER) Brigade at Gottingen (Unit A), supported by the artillery. This is a must in order to deprive 2nd (GER) Division of Divisional Integrity and to avoid having 4 Bde loose in the WP rear area and dangerously close to the Supply Unit when it appears; two divisions are a must too in order to ensure maximum chance of Turn 1 elimination, especially if 4 Bde is (as it should be) in an Improved Position – I have seen a solo rifle division prove to be 3 x 1 CF against a doubled NATO unit and crumble into dust in a 1-5 attack! Remaining division advances via Kassel to eliminate the Kassel Home Guard (Heimatschutz, Unit B) and go on to pin the 6th (BR) Armoured Brigade (Unit C) in the second movement phase. The first two divisions advance via Kassel on their second movement phase, provided they have eliminated the enemy at Gottingen (note that they would not have enough MF left to reach 6 Bde).

Central Front – North: Two tank and two rifle divisions, all entering at the Eisenach autobahn. One tank division turns SW from the town, crossing narrowest point of rough terrain and then deploys on to the two adjacent hex-lines running to Fulda; in two movement phases its units will thus reach the hexes immediately N and NE of the town, pinning 'A' Sqn, 11th Armoured Cavalry Regiment (Unit D). The remaining three divisions cross the frontier by road to the area between the butt-end of the autobahn and the road north of it; on 2nd movement phase, they move SW on adjacent hex-lines to pass N of Fulda, heading in general direction of Frankfurt; one division may broaden the front by moving along the autobahn to the area of the multiple road-junction SE of Marburg.

Central Front - South: Two tank divisions enter at Hex 5124 (sorry!) and move W to concentrate in area round road junction. On second phase move one division, two regiments stacked in lead, straight NW to overrun 'B' Sqn 11 Armd. Cav. (Unit E) in its starting hex; if successful, expend remaining 1 MP in moving W - if not, remain in position to pin 'B' Sqn. Second division follows if overrun succeeds or else swings W, once clear of forest/ rough area, to finish up S (and clear) of 'B' Sqn's location. (All this detail is necessary for maximum movement, avoiding traffic jams).

South Front: Two tank and two rifle divisons, paired off. First pair also enter at Hex 5124 and concentrate immediately behind the two divisions destined for the Fulda area. On their second movement phase they move NW and then W to reach the autobahn about 5 hexes S of Fulda, ready to move on Wurzburg from the north. The second pair enter at 5126, moving S then SW to cross the rough terrain at its narrowest point. They then cross the Main and deploy just north of the rough ground SW of Schweinfurt.

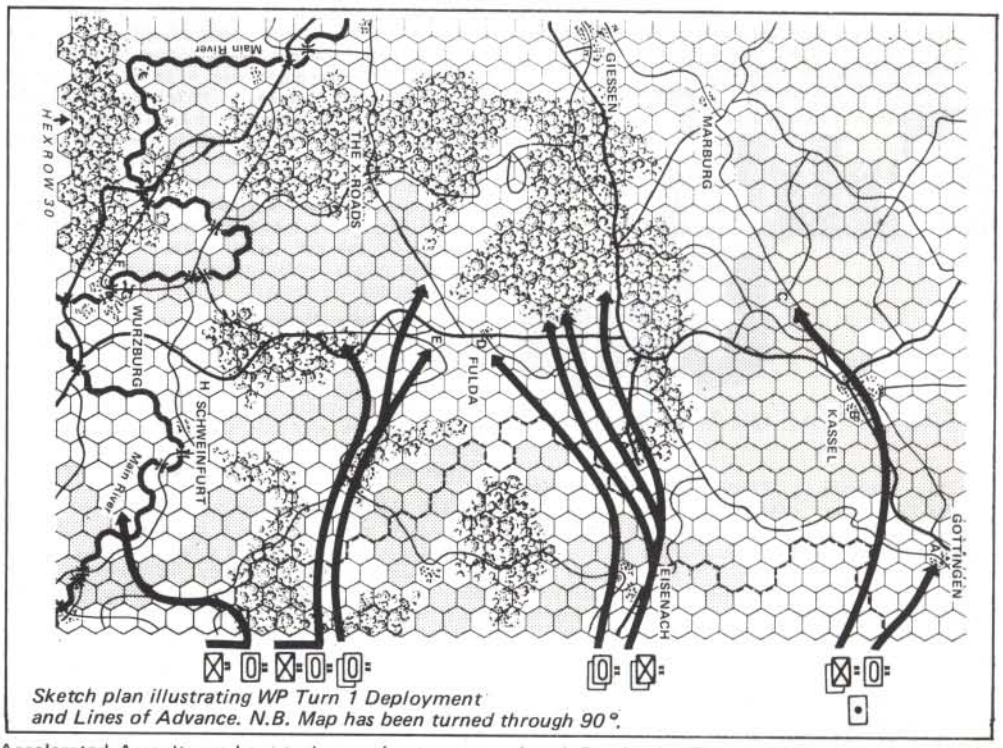
Now the battle develops. On Turn 2 the Central Front forces drive SW to hit the NATO line *hard* between the crossroads in Hex 3222 and the narrow neck of woodland SE of Giessen. From the point of view of terrain this is the weakest sector of the NATO front and also where their forces will be thin. Possession of the crossroads will enable the WP forces to drive southward, either to turn SE and take the Wurzburg position in the rear or NW to the US supply unit at Aschaffenburg and the Main bridges. Use infiltration to the full to pin NATO units and surround them (provided you don't over-expose your own units) and use Accelerated Assault to knock the NATO line back out of the wooded area. Keep a flank guard to prevent interference from the Giessen area – a rifle division will do very well for this. On the North front advance to threaten Marburg and Giessen. This is a sensitive area to NATO because of the road to Koln and Bonn via Siegen and the German Supply Unit in Giessen and NATO units cannot leave the approaches unsecured.

In the south the two pairs of WP divisions now close on Wurzburg from north and east with the object of crushing the two NATO divisions there and, if possible, prising them away from the Main – infiltration from the north can do this. If the Main crossings north of the town are left uncovered then at least one full division should head for Aschaffenburg – due to shortage of units the NATO line probably won't extend as far south as this, the Wurzburg force being entrusted with covering the southern approaches. Remaining WP forces should concentrate on destroying the 3rd (US)(Units F & G) and 12th (GER) divisions (Unit H) and then advancing to Darmstadt and Bensheim; even if the battle of Wurzburg costs them heavily the remnants will still be a potent threat to NATO's southern flank, diverting sorely-needed French divisions from the central area.

Special Points

1. **Chemical Warfare.** Despite what the Game Notes say about using CW early to force NATO to 'prove' unknown units at a disadvantage, this does not prove to be of significant benefit to the WP player. A better time is when the NATO line is sagging before the onslaught and before French reinforcements can arrive in strength – this indicates Turn 3 although to delay to Turn 4 will create maximum disruption of NATO's supply system. But in any case do NOT make the mistake of announcing CW at a time when a large number of WP units are still some distance from the NATO line – the 'slowing-up' effect means that even the less-affected WP units can move only three hexes per phase through wooded terrain and two through rough. It is better to close with NATO in one's own player-turn and *then* announce CW at the start of the NATO player-turn! CW effects last for 'two complete turns' after its inception but the rules do not clarify just what that means, bearing in mind that CW can be announced *during* a turn. I advise that a 'complete turn' begins with the movement phase in which CW is declared i.e. if it is declared at the start of the NATO segment of Turn 3 then its effects persist until the end of the WP segment of Turn 5.

2. **Accelerated Assault.** Well, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs but if most



Sketch plan illustrating WP Turn 1 Deployment and Lines of Advance. N.B. Map has been turned through 90°.

Accelerated Assaults are kept to 'one up' not many eggs need be broken. 'Three up' should be used only when the risk is justified i.e. to eliminate a Supply Unit in a town hex or to destroy a stubborn unit in an Improved Position but try to avoid using divisions which contain two or more units at their last step – loss would destroy these *and* nullify the division's integrity. Never, except in an emergency, commit *untried* units to Accelerated Assault, especially if it is to be more than 'One up'; this is tempting Providence.

3. **Supply.** Do not waste time, effort and resources in trying to move your supply unit 1 by transport, entering in Turn 4; by the end of movement in Turn 5 it will have reached only the autobahn junction north of Fulda and it will take the whole WP segment of Turn 6 to make it operational. To attempt to move it further will take the whole operation forward into Turn 7! The best course is to make use of WP Supply Units' ability to expend two MF per phase inside East Germany; bring on the unit in Turn 2 via Eisenach, then move it south by road over the rough terrain and then NW and west to Hex 4414. From there its 20 MF range will extend, via the autobahn, to just across the Rhine at Mainz and to much of the Frankfurt area. Use the Supply Column entering in Turn 4 to move as rapidly as possible to a point whence it can supply the maximum number of units in the south. Even so, not all WP units will be in supply but many more will be, and for longer, than if the WP player tries to do a Pickford. The Supply Unit must be protected, preferably by the 106th Guards Parachute Division or by surviving units of 'broken' divisions; far to the rear though it may be, it is not beyond the reach of an airmobile raid or helicopter attack.

NATO Tactics

The NATO player should set up a defensive line running from just east of Marburg to east of the crossroads in Hex 3222 and thence to Wurzburg. In the northern sector the two surviving brigades of 2nd (GER) Division, 6th (BR) Armoured Brigade and the one available brigade of 5th (GER) Division should be deployed north-south along the 30 hexline at one-hex intervals, left flank brigade (6 Armd is best) in the rough hex 3008 and the right in 3014; a tenuous line but placed in fairly good defensive terrain and covering all approach roads to the Giessen-Marburg area. 1 (BE) Division should move up to NW of Marburg as a long-stop to block WP attampts to infiltrate on to the Siegen road.

In the crossroads area the most suitable units to deploy are 1st and 2nd Brigades of 8th (US) Division in hexes 3321 and 3323 – they can just make it in Turn 1. This leaves a wide gap between the road and the autobahn which must be plugged somehow – if the WP player has failed to reach 11 Armd Cav in the Fulda area, due to faulty initial deployment, then pull back both squadrons and set them up *in Improved Positions* in, it is suggested, hexes 3116 and 3218 (both wooded hexes); if, however, the regiment has been gobbled up at Fulda then use 26th (GER) Airmobile Brigade and an artillery unit. These are both desperate measures but NATO is in a First Ypres situation when any unit will do in a pinch. 3rd (US) Armoured Division is well placed for Turn 1 deployment but try to avoid putting it in the line as its units' defensive factors are poor, even with the integrity bonus and it is better deployed 3-4 hexes south of Giessen as a counter-attack force.

A wide gap between 8 Div at the crossroads and the Wurzburg salient must be accepted at this stage but a helicopter unit can be used to extend NATO's right flank as a temporary measure.

The Wurzburg area should be denied to WP forces for as long as feasible, and the battle area should be *east* of the Main to cover all the crossing points. Correct initial deployment is vital here and the following plan is offered; 12 (GER) Div on hexes 3827, 4028 and 3829: 3 (US) Mech Div on 4030, 4032 and 3831: 42nd US Artillery moves up to support.

As the battle progresses the strong defensive terrain east of Giessen should be held as long as possible. If necessary, 6 Armd Bde and the weakened 2 (GER) Div should go into Improved Positions while 5 (GER) Div, now complete, remains mobile as the counter-attack force. The Belgian division should not be committed to the main battle but should remain mobile on the Siegen road to block WP attempts to dash for the autobahn near Bonn. In the central sector, a fierce offensive-defensive must be maintained to keep hitting at WP probes and advances so that the line sways west in the WP player-turn and east again in that of NATO. In particular, the crossroads must be held as long as possible; 8 (US) Div, now complete, can edge a little northward as the first French division to arrive moves in on its right flank (unless some crisis requires the French presence elsewhere).

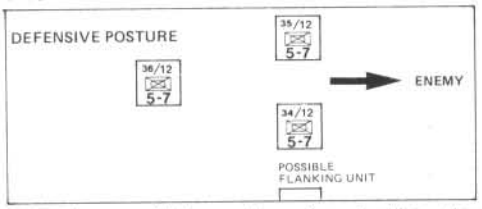
At Wurzburg every attempt should be made to strike at exposed WP units in the clear terrain, with a view to elimination and not merely retreat; unless the WP player has massed a large force around the city a couple of losses could seriously reduce his capacity to attack and thus remove any real threat to the southern flank. However, if the position is eventually outflanked or if the cross-roads in the central front passes into WP control the NATO force at Wurzburg should fall back to keep level with the rest of the NATO line, one division falling back along the autobahn and the other along the Bensheim road.

If by Turn 5 the NATO line is still continuous,

albeit never so thin, and is still on the Giessen-Offenbach-Main River line, then the WP offensive is bogging down and the chance of Soviet victory is rapidly slipping away.

Special Points

1. Defensive Gambits. Quite a lot has been said about 'defensive posture'. What does this mean? The suggested disposition of a division for maximum defensive strength is the classic 'two up' one, i.e. the whole formation in an equilateral triangle with one side facing the general direction of the enemy thus:



All units are within one hex of each other, thus conveying the integrity bonus on themselves; the rear unit provides defence in depth, blocking penetration in the event of a forward unit's having to retreat and is also free to join in a counter-attack; an assault is more likely to crush in the triangle rather than to disrupt it, thus preserving integrity and, last but not least, the controlled frontage of the formation is five hexes. The chief weakness is each unit can be surrounded if the enemy can outflank the division but this can be controlled by placing divisions adjacent with their frontages along the same hex-line, by having flanks resting on difficult terrain and by having 'spare' units extend the flank.

However, this posture is only for meeting the WP assault in the WP player-turn. In his turn, the NATO player should seek to lunge forward to cut off and destroy enemy units and then fall back to the defensive posture; attacks should therefore be so staged and timed that flanking units are retreated at least two hexes, the intended victim is isolated and destroyed and the attackers are left out of contact and free to fall back. In particular, NATO should go for the tank regiments; their attack CF makes them the teeth of the WP offensive but their low defensive value means that they are particularly vulnerable to counterattack, even when stacked and with divisional integrity. Nor should it be forgotten that the loss of one regiment writes off an entire division's integrity bonus; to eliminate one regiment in each of three divisions does more harm than eliminating all three regiments of one division – a tank division of 3 x 3-1s has a potential attack CR of 18 but reduction to two units brings this down to 6!

2. Improved Positions. These make the occupying unit strong and difficult to shift, especially in rough terrain – a unit in IP in an urban hex needs 7-1 odds to give a 1 in 3 chance of retreating it and even then the IP rules mean that it will remain in place, losing 1 step. On the other hand the unit becomes immobile and quite unable to react quickly to a changing situation; for example, if a NATO unit goes into IP at the end of Turn 3 it will not be able to move again before the first NATO movement phase in Turn 5, leaving four WP movement phases in between. For this reason, NATO units should go into IP only when a Gibraltar must be set up (Giessen in Turn 5, perhaps) or when units have been bypassed without much hope of rejoining, or have to be left, pinned, in front of the steam-roller. A unit thus dug in in, say, a forest hex astride a road can be a spanner in Ivan's works. But in all cases the proportion of units in IP must be kept low, the majority being left free for the mobile operations demanded by mechanised warfare. WP units, by the way, should never go into IP; if this is necessary the Soviet offensive must be so bogged down that it will never get going again.

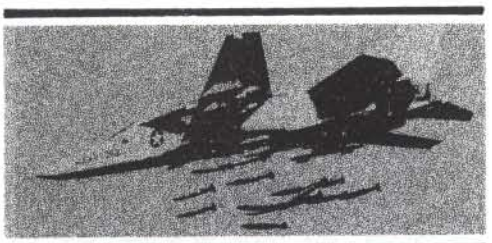
3. Chemical Warfare. When this is launched NATO must form as straight a line as possible on as good terrain as possible, falling back a little to lengthen the enemy run-up and then put on its tin hat. Counterattacking should be kept to a minimum then only either in great strength or against weak units, in both cases to contain the WP assault as much as possible. Maximum use of difficult terrain should be made as the WP movement suffers badly in it, even though WP units are less affected by a CW situation. It will be a bad storm but it can be ridden out.

4. Supply. Using the German Supply Column, try to evacuate the German Supply Depot from Giessen to a spot nearer Frankfurt – it can be moved and fully operational again by the end of Turn 4 and in the interim its 10 MP range in mobile mode will take care of the German units at Giessen. The Supply Unit at Wurzburg must be regarded as a write-off.

By the same token the US Supply Unit at Aschaffenburg should be moved as far towards Darmstadt as possible; it can be operating from the city by the second NATO movement phase of Turn 5 and in any case the other US Supply Unit at Mainz should cover all US units. The French Supply Unit should also set up in Mainz.

5. Movement of French Arrivals. The quickest route to the Frankfurt area is, believe it or not, by autobahn via Kaiserslautern and Mannheim; French units should be brought on elsewhere only if they should be required to counter a breakthrough towards Bonn.

It should be understood that what has been presented does not claim to be The School Solution and the only way to tackle 'Fulda Gap'; it is *a* solution and is open to amendment and modification – for example, there would be nothing wrong with a plan which has the secondary thrust directed at Giessen provided that it is strong enough to break through the tough defence which will be met there. Whatever variation is tried, players will always find that the 'basic' game has a lot to offer in itself. What follows is a section on the Air and Nuclear rules as a guide to those who want to press on further.



AIR POWER AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Air Power. The first comment is that the system of air superiority points allocation ensures that, assuming both players allocate a quantity of ASP per turn, neither stands much chance at any stage in the game of attaining an Air Superiority level of more than 2 and that a level in the high 1's is more likely still. The WP player has a slight edge in that he alone can allot ASP in Turn 1, thus inclining air superiority his way but thereafter the NATO player can deadlock the situation by allocating maximum ASP on subsequent turns. Even if the alternative system of allocating a finite number of points to either side, advocated in Rule 18.7, is used, the WP player can establish an initial lead and then relinquish it very slowly, thus preventing the NATO player from swinging the balance of air power sufficiently in his favour to enable him to bring on any air units before his last turn. My view is that yet another system of attaining air superiority is required but that is beyond the scope of this article; perhaps SPI could think about this as such an alternative would have to be based on 'Real-World' data, not on amateur game-mathematics.

Suffice it to say that neither side is likely to be able to deploy more than a few air units, an AS level of 1 being the probable maximum reached; this would be round about Turns 2 and 3 for the WP and Turns 6 and 7 for NATO. Of these the WP player's two weak SU-7s have very little intrinsic striking power and will have to rely on the sole TU-28, his Electronic Counter-measures air unit, to get them anywhere in view of the Nike sites' map-wide ZOC. The farthest a two-unit strike can reach, given maximum freedom from units' Air Defence Zones, is approximately to the east edge of Frankfurt (remember that WP air units can 'take off' from *any* East German hex) but a further 4 CF only will have been added to the combat. It should also be noted that the maximum reach of the air-borne divisions' three transport flights, flying together, would be to the 28 hexline; this probably precludes an airdrop in the rear of NATO's main battle-line although a similar drop in the Wurzburg area could be feasible. In short, do not expect too much of the paratroops.

NATO, given an AS level of 1, is in rather better case in that his three strike units have a strike value of 9 each and he is troubled by WP air defence zones only once he reaches enemy units. He can thus, using his ECM unit to conserve the others' strike values, add 18 CF to a ground assault, a useful card to have when trying to fend off WP incursions during the Chemical Warfare phase - even so, he can still deliver only one heavy punch once, on one hex, per turn.

The best value of air units to both sides is in their nuclear strike capability and both players are urged to use their air units in the nuclear strike phase of the turn, rather than in normal combat. This is especially true in the case of the WP player; he can deliver two nuclear strikes or he can add 4 CF to a ground combat – the choice seems obvious. NATO are likely to have only one air unit (Jaguars) capable of delivering a nuclear strike but they will also be able to make an 18-CF normal strike in addition, using the two A-10 units. At which point it seems opportune to pass on to the nuclear rules.

Nuclear Strikes. If the nuclear rules are used then I suggest very strongly that the Air Rules Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) Rules are also used. Without air power a good proportion of nuclear warheads cannot be delivered, while without ECM a note of unreality creeps in as it becomes all too easy to 'nuke' the enemy's rear areas out of existence; furthermore ECM is linked to one's current AS rating.

The maximum number of warheads which can be delivered on each turn is as follows:-

WP : 10 (6 without air superiority)
NATO: 10 (8 without air superiority)

As one should presume that one will be *without* air superiority for at least half of the game and as it takes three warheads in one hex to have a 50% chance of hurting the enemy, four to have a 66% chance, it becomes obvious that there is going to be no holocaust and that areas of strikes and choice of targets will require some care (note particularly Rule 19.23 about units with special defence; this includes Supply Units).

The WP player is advised to attempt a heavy nuclear strike on 'A' Sqn 11 Armd Cav in Fulda on Turn 1; if he achieves an AS level of 1 on this turn he can deliver three warheads, with a good chance of eliminating the unit before the first movement phase and thus leaving the mouth of the gap open, especially as overrun against 'B' Sqn is almost bound to succeed. Thereafter the use of all available warheads to achieve the speedy reduction of the Wurzburg salient should be considered as an early conquest here will gravely compromise NATO's right flank.

NATO's best option is to use maximum nuclear effort against the WP main thrust; not only is this thrust the most dangerous to him but also it is likely to present the greatest concentration of units to his numerous but comparatively short-ranged artillery. Both players should seek the following targets: double-strength units (even a 1-step loss nullifies the double-CF bonus); stacked units; units in IP blocking an approach route; units at their last step, especially when their loss will lose an entire division its Integrity bonus. On the other hand, strikes against Supply Units are likely to be a waste of time and warheads, especially as ECM will weaken the strike before its effects are assessed; this assertion assumes that such strikes are likely to be made with the unit 'unengaged'. Both sides should themselves seek to avoid presenting targets; double-CF units and units at their last step you can do little about but you can certainly avoid having too many stacked units around. As in 'real-world' nuclear-threat tactics you should concentrate (i.e. stack) only for combat and disperse again immediately afterwards, using the second movement phase to achieve this.

Air power and the nuclear option will increase the scope of the 'basic' game but are unlikely to change it beyond all knowing; as the game notes say these rules do not deal with the larger issues of nuclear war i.e. the dangers of promoting a strategic exchange – we are concerned with the so-called tactical warhead of 5, 10 or (O Mercy!) 20 KT.